







Class PZ8

Book A54 Si

Copy 2



















14. As Fairy tales; tr. by Carl Siemsen.

1902.

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

374  
526

Hans Christian Andersen was born in the city of Odense, Denmark, April 2, 1805. His father was a poor shoemaker, but belonged to a good family which had once possessed wealth. When Hans was nine years of age his father died; shortly afterwards he was sent by his mother to Copenhagen, where he was refused a situation at the theatre, but finally met with a liberal patron who secured for him the advantages of an academic education at the expense of the State.

From an early age Andersen showed a remarkable aptitude for literature, and wrote many tales and poems, but his first successful book was "The Improvisatore," a romance published in 1834. Other novels and dramas followed. His fame, however, will always chiefly rest on his fairy tales and wonder stories for children. These are of endless variety and exhaustless charm.

To write a book for boys and girls which shall enter naturally and consistently into the child's point of view, is as real, if not as great, an achievement as to compose an epic or tragedy. Of all of the writers for children, Hans Christian Andersen is unquestionably the chief, and a new edition of his perennially popular fairy tales calls for no apology. His style is so vivid and swift, and his management of the most improbable incidents is so convincingly real, that not only children but their elders take the wildest flights of fancy as sober fact while under the spell of the magician. No writer ever succeeded in putting himself so wholly in the child's place and in looking at life so completely through the child's eyes.

The standard American edition of Andersen's works fills ten volumes. His writings have been translated into nearly all the European languages.

Andersen lived to attain the fame which was denied him through his early years of struggle and obscurity. A statue had been erected in his honor before his death, which occurred August 1, 1875. He was given a magnificent funeral by the State. His principal monument, however, will always be the love of countless children the world over.

Copy 2 ..



PZ 8

.A54

Si

Copy 2



## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE TINDER-BOX . . . . .	I
LITTLE KLAUS AND BIG KLAUS . . . . .	9
LITTLE IDA'S FLOWERS . . . . .	21
LIZZIE THUMB . . . . .	29
THE TRAVELLING COMPANION . . . . .	40
THE LITTLE MERMAID . . . . .	58
THE EMPEROR'S NEW SUIT . . . . .	78
THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER . . . . .	83
THE WILD SWANS . . . . .	88
THE FLYING TRUNK . . . . .	103
THE STORKS . . . . .	109
THE BRONZE PIG . . . . .	114
THE SWINE-HERD . . . . .	124
THE NIGHTINGALE . . . . .	129
THE UGLY DUCKLING . . . . .	138
THE FIR-TREE . . . . .	147
THE SNOW-QUEEN . . . . .	155
THE LITTLE MATCH-GIRL . . . . .	186







## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

---

	PAGE
"THE DOG HE PLACED ON THE TRUNK" . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
"LITTLE KLAUS CRACKED HIS WHIP OVER THE FIVE HORSES" . . . . .	9
"THE SEXTON AT ONCE CRAWLED OUT" . . . . .	14
LITTLE IDA'S FLOWERS . . . . .	24
"SO THEY GATHERED ROUND THE GREEN STALK OF THE LEAF ON WHICH LIZZIE THUMB WAS SITTING, AND GNAWED IT THROUGH" . . . . .	31
"HE CAME AND PAID A VISIT IN HIS BLACK FUR COAT" . . . . .	33
"SHE HERSELF WAS SEATED ON A SNOW-WHITE ONE" . . . . .	48
"HE SEIZED HIM BY HIS LONG BLACK BEARD" . . . . .	55
"A BIG SHIP LAY THERE WITH THREE MASTS" . . . . .	62
"THEY CLUNG TO EVERYTHING IN THE SEA THEY COULD LAY HOLD OF" . . . . .	68
"'IF IT MIGHT NOW PLEASE YOUR MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY TO UNDRESS'" . . . . .	81
"'TIN SOLDIER,' SAID THE IMP, 'YOU KEEP YOUR EYES TO YOURSELF!'" . . . . .	84
"SHE MET AN OLD WOMAN WITH BERRIES IN A BASKET" . . . . .	91
"THE WAVES SWEEPED OVER THE ROCK AND DRENCHED THEM" . . . . .	95
"'WILL YOU OBLIGE BY TELLING US A STORY?' SAID THE QUEEN" . . . . .	105
"THEY TRAINED EVERY DAY, AND AT LAST FLEW SO LIGHTLY THAT IT WAS A PLEASURE TO SEE THEM" . . . . .	112
"IT WENT THUMP! THUMP! DOWN THE STAIRS WITH HIM" . . . . .	116
"THE PRINCESS AND SWINE-HERD WERE TURNED OUT OF THE EMPIRE" . . . . .	128
"HE BEHELD DEATH SITTING ON THE BED WITH THE EM- PEROR'S CROWN ON HIS HEAD" . . . . .	135
"'HE IS TOO BIG,' THEY ALL SAID" . . . . .	141



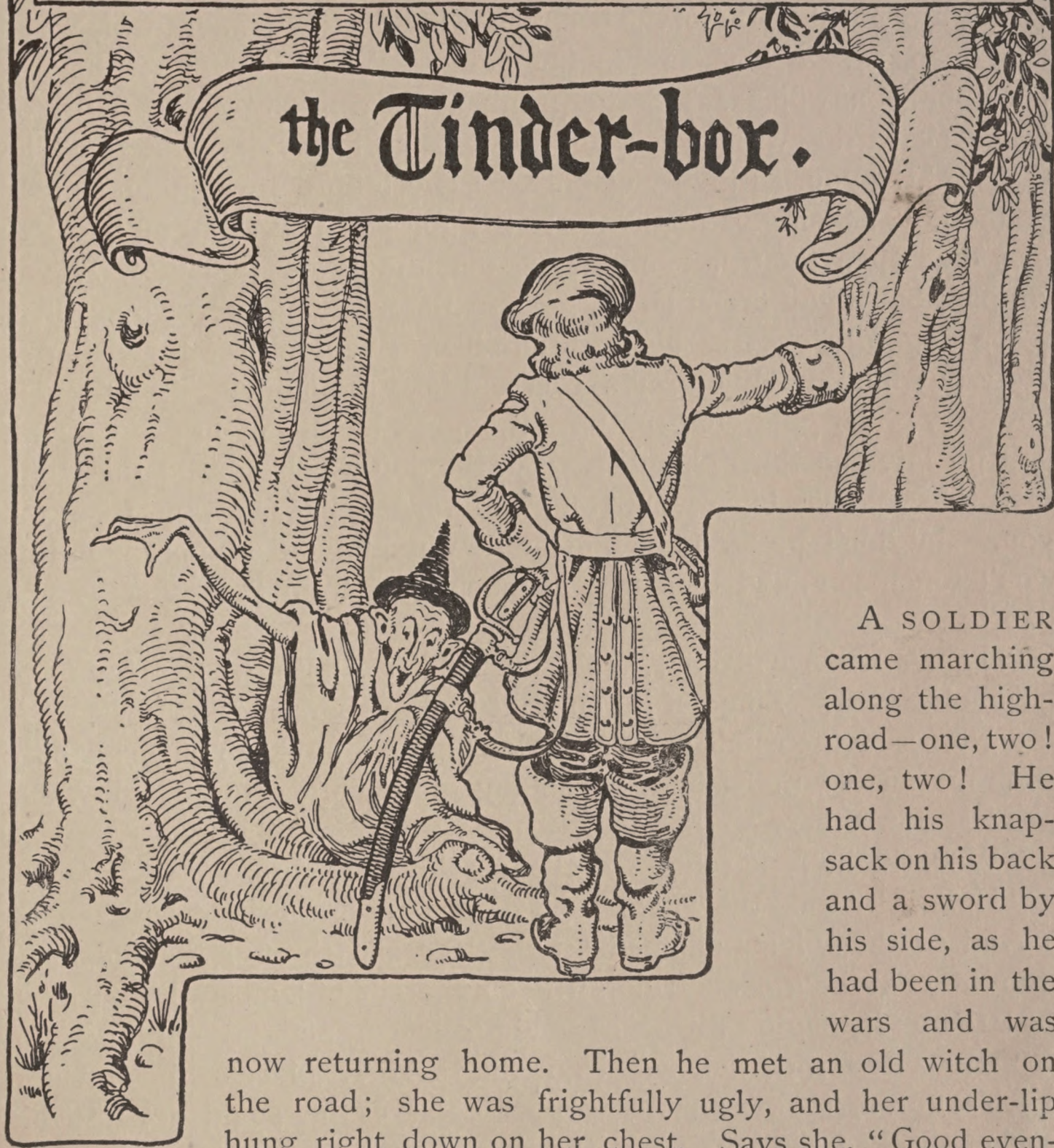
# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
"OFTEN THEY CAME WITH THEIR BASKETS AND SEATED THEMSELVES BY THE TREE" . . . . .	147 ✓
"THE PERSON DRIVING TURNED ROUND AND NODDED" . . . . .	160 ✓
"IN THE LARGE OLD SMOKE-COLORED HALL . . . A HUGE FIRE WAS BURNING" . . . . .	174 ✓
"IN THE LIGHT STOOD HER GRANDMOTHER" . . . . .	188 ✓



# Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales.

## the Tinder-box.



A SOLDIER came marching along the high-road—one, two! one, two! He had his knapsack on his back and a sword by his side, as he had been in the wars and was

now returning home. Then he met an old witch on the road; she was frightfully ugly, and her under-lip hung right down on her chest. Says she, "Good evening, soldier! What a fine sword and big knapsack you have got! You seem indeed a real soldier, and now you shall have as much money as you care about."

"Thank you, old witch," said the soldier.

"You see that big tree there," said the witch, pointing to a tree close by. "It is hollow, and you shall climb up to the top, when you will see a hole, through which you will slide to the bottom. I will fasten a rope round your body, and haul you up when you call to me."



"What shall I do in the tree?" said the soldier.

"Fetch money," replied the witch. "When you reach the bottom you will find yourself in a great corridor light as day, for hundreds of lamps are burning there. Then you will see three doors which you can open, as the keys are in the holes. When you enter the first chamber you will see a large trunk in the middle of the floor, on which sits a dog with eyes as big as a pair of teacups; but don't let that frighten you. I give you my blue check apron, which you spread on the floor; then go straight up to the dog and place him on it. You may then open the trunk and take as much money as you like. It's all copper; but if you prefer silver, go into the next chamber, where there sits a dog with eyes as big as windmills. But don't let that frighten you; put him simply on my apron, and take the money. Should you, however, prefer gold, you can have it, and as much as you can carry, if you go into the third chamber. But the dog which sits on the trunk there has eyes as big as the Round Tower.<sup>1</sup> That *is* a dog, I can tell you. But don't be afraid of him; only put him on my apron, and he won't touch you, and then take as much gold from the trunk as you like."

"That's not a bad offer," said the soldier. "But what are you to have, old witch? Some of it you want too, of course."

"No," said the witch, "not a single coin do I want. You shall only fetch me an old tinder-box, which my grandmother forgot when she was last down there."

"Well, tie the rope round me, then," said the soldier.

"Here it is," said the witch, "and here is my apron."

And so the soldier climbed up the tree, slid through the hole, and stood next in the great corridor, where hundreds of lamps were burning. Lo! there sat the dog with eyes as big as teacups, staring at him.

"You are a nice fellow," said the soldier, placed him on the witch's apron, took as many copper coins as he could get into his pockets, locked the trunk, put the dog back on it, and went into the next chamber. Lo! there sat the dog with the eyes as big as windmills.

"You shouldn't stare at me so," said the soldier, "it might injure your eyes." And so he placed the dog on the witch's apron; but when he saw all the silver coin in the trunk he threw away all the copper ones, and filled his pockets and his knapsack with silver instead.

<sup>1</sup> The tower of the Trinity Church in Copenhagen. — TR.



Then he went into the third chamber. What a terrible sight! The dog there had really eyes as big as the Round Tower, and they rolled around in his head like wheels.

"Good evening," said the soldier, and touched his cap, as he had never seen such a dog before. But having had a good look at him he thought that would do, lifted him on to the floor, and opened the trunk. Dear me, what a quantity of gold! With that he could have bought the whole of the capital, all the gingerbread pigs, and all the tin soldiers, whips, and rocking-horses in the whole world. Then the soldier threw away all the silver coin with which he had filled his pockets and knapsack, and put gold into them instead, as well as in his boots and cap, so that he was hardly able to walk. Now he had indeed money! The dog he placed on the trunk, slammed the door, and called to the witch: —

"Now, haul me up, old witch!"

"Have you got the tinder-box?" asked the witch.

"Really," said the soldier, "I had quite forgotten that," and went back to fetch it. The witch hauled him up, and he stood again in the road, with pockets, boots, knapsack, and cap full of money.

"What are you going to do with that tinder-box?" asked the soldier.

"That's no business of yours," said the witch. "You have got your money. Give me then the tinder-box."

"Nonsense," said the soldier. "Tell me at once what you want to do with it, or I draw my sword and cut your head off."

"No, I won't!" said the witch.

So the soldier cut her head off. There she lay! But he tied up all the money in her apron, slung the bundle on his back, put the tinder-box in his pocket, and made straight for the town. It was a pretty town, and he put up at the best inn, engaged the very finest rooms, and ordered the dishes he liked best, because now with all the money he had he was a rich man. True, the waiter who cleaned his boots thought that they were rather a queer pair of old things for such a rich gentleman; but he had not yet bought new ones. The next day he obtained fine boots and clothes; and now the soldier had become quite a swell, and the people told him about all the beautiful things to be found in the town, about the King, and how lovely the Princess his daughter was.

"Where is she to be seen?" asked the soldier.

"She is not to be seen at all," they all said; "she lives in a great copper castle, with such a number of walls and towers around it!"



Nobody but the King is allowed to visit her, because it has been prophesied that she shall marry a private, and that the King cannot endure."

"I should indeed like to see her," thought the soldier; but that was of course out of the question.

Now he lived a merry life, went to the theatre, drove in the park, and gave much money to the poor; and that was kind of him. He knew from former days how hard it was not to have a penny. He was rich now, had fine clothes, and made many friends, who all said that he was a very good fellow and a real gentleman, and the soldier liked to hear that. But as he paid away money every day and had none in return, he had soon only a few coppers left, and was obliged to remove from the splendid rooms he had occupied, to a small garret right up under the roof, clean his own boots and patch them with a darning-needle, and none of his friends came to see him any more, as there were so many stairs to mount.

It was a pitch-dark evening, and he could not even afford to buy a candle, when he remembered that there was a little bit in the tinder-box, which he had fetched from the hollow tree into which the witch had helped him. He brought out the tinder-box and the bit of candle; but as soon as he struck fire and the sparks flew from the flint, the door sprang open and the dog with eyes as big as teacups, which he had seen down in the tree, stood before him and said, "What are your orders, Sir?"

"What does this mean?" said the soldier. "That is indeed something like a tinder-box. Can I thus get what I ask for? Get me some money, then," he said to the dog, which was gone in an instant, and returned as quickly with a bag of money in its mouth.

Yes, now the soldier knew what a splendid tinder-box it was. If he struck it once, the dog sitting on the trunk with the copper coin appeared; if twice, that sitting on the trunk with the silver ones; and if three times, the one on that with gold in it.

Now he moved back to his splendid rooms, and again dressed in his fine clothes, and all his former friends welcomed him and courted him again very much.

Once he said to himself: "It is strange that that Princess is not to be seen. She is so lovely everybody says; but what's the good of that, if she is always to be locked up in that great copper castle with the many towers? Cannot I possibly get a look at her? Where is my



tinder-box?" And then he struck fire, and lo! there was the dog with eyes as big as teacups.

"It is certainly midnight," said the soldier; "but I should so very much like to see the Princess only for a moment."

The dog at once ran out, and before the soldier knew of it was back with the Princess. She lay sleeping on the dog's back, and was so lovely that everybody could see she was a real Princess. The soldier could not help kissing her, as he was a true soldier. The dog ran back with the Princess; but the next morning, at the King and Queen's break-



fast, the Princess said she had had such a funny dream in the night, of a dog and a soldier. She had ridden on the dog's back, and the soldier had kissed her.

"That is indeed a nice story," said the Queen.

The following night one of the old ladies of the court had to watch by the bed of the Princess in order to see if it really was a dream, or what it might be.

The soldier longed immensely to see the Princess again, and in the night the dog came, took her on his back, and ran off as fast as he could; but the old lady put on hunting-boots and followed just as quickly. When she saw them disappearing in a big house, she thought, "Now I know where it is," and made a cross with a piece of chalk on the door of the house. Then she went home to bed, and soon the dog came back with the Princess; but when he saw that a cross had been made on the door of the house where the soldier lived, he too took a



piece of chalk and made a cross on all the doors of the town; and that was cleverly done, as now the old lady could not find the right one, there being crosses on all.

Early in the morning the King, the Queen, the old lady, and all the officers of the court went forth to see where the Princess had been.

"Here it is," said the King, seeing the first door with a cross on it.

"No, it is there, my dear," said the Queen, seeing another with a cross on.

"But there is one, and there is another," they all said. Wherever they turned their eyes there were crosses on the doors, and they saw it was useless to try to find the right one.



But the Queen was a very clever woman, who knew more than driving about in a carriage. She took her great gold scissors, cut up a large piece of silk and made a neat little bag, which she filled with grits and tied it to the Princess's back, and then cut a hole in the bag so that the grits should run out all along the road the Princess took.

The next night the dog came back, took the Princess on his back and ran with her to the soldier, who loved her dearly, and wished he was a prince so that he might marry her.

The dog did not notice the grits trailing behind, right from the castle to the soldier's window, where he ran up along the wall with the Princess.

In the morning the King and Queen saw plainly where their daughter had been, and so the soldier was arrested and put in jail.



There he was now, and oh! how dark and dismal it was there; and then they told him, "To-morrow you are to be hanged." That was not pleasant to hear, and he had left the tinder-box at the inn.

In the morning he could see, through the bars of the little window, people hurrying out of the town to see him hanged. He heard the drums beaten and saw the soldiers march past. Every one was on his legs. There was even a cobbler's 'prentice with his apron and slippers on, who ran so fast that one of the slippers flew off his foot and right up against the wall where the soldier sat looking through the bars.



"Hi! here, you cobbler's 'prentice," shouted the soldier. "You need not be in such a hurry, as nothing will be done till I come.<sup>1</sup> But if you will run to where I lived, and fetch me my tinder-box, I will give you a shilling; but mind you make use of your legs."

The cobbler's 'prentice liked to earn the shilling, and ran as fast as he could to fetch the tinder-box, which he gave to the soldier, and — yes, now you shall hear!

Outside the town a high gallows had been erected, and around it stood soldiers and thousands of people. The King and Queen sat on a beautiful throne right opposite the judge and the whole council.

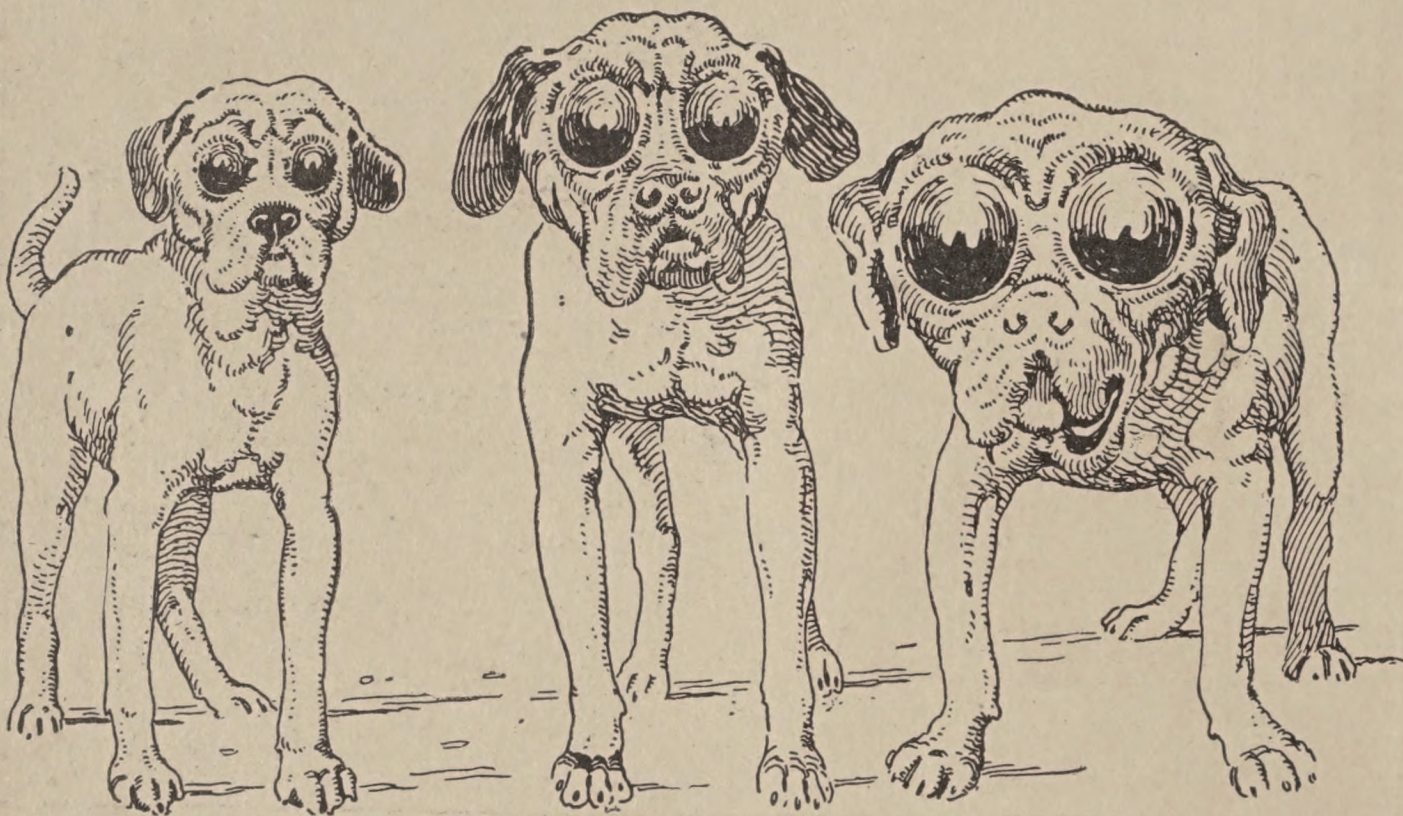
The soldier stood already on the top of the ladder; but as they were

<sup>1</sup> Has since become a common adage in Scandinavia. — TR.



putting the rope around his neck, he said that the condemned was always granted an innocent wish before he suffered his punishment. He would so much like a smoke; it would be the last in this world.

The King could not well refuse this; and so the soldier took his tinder-box and struck fire. One—two—three, and there stood all three dogs before him: that with eyes as big as teacups, that with eyes as big as windmills, and that with eyes as big as the Round Tower. "Now help me not to be hung!" said the soldier; and so the dogs rushed at the judge and the whole council, seized one by the leg and



another by the nose, and threw them so high into the air that they were smashed into bits.

"I won't," said the King; but the biggest dog seized both him and the Queen and threw them after the others.

Then all the soldiers became frightened; and the people shouted, "Dear soldier, you shall be King and have the lovely Princess."

So they seated the soldier in the King's carriage, and the three dogs jumped before it and shouted, "Hurrah!" The boys whistled with their fingers, and the soldiers presented arms. The Princess came forth from the copper castle and became Queen, which pleased her well enough. The marriage feast lasted a whole week, and the dogs, too, sat at table staring about with their big eyes.





JJ MORA









IN a village there lived two men both with the same name, both being named Klaus; but one had four horses and the other only one, and in order to distinguish between them, the one who had four horses was called Big Klaus, and the one who had only one, Little Klaus. Now you shall hear what happened to them both, as this is a true story.

All through the week Little Klaus was compelled to plough for Big Klaus, and lend him his only horse; and in return for this, Big Klaus helped him with his four, but only once a-week, and that was on Sunday.<sup>1</sup> Hi! Hi! how Little Klaus cracked his whip over the five horses! they were as good as his own on that day. The sun shone brightly, and the church-bells called people to service. They were all dressed in their best, and had prayer-books under their arms, and they looked at Little Klaus who ploughed with five horses, who in return, feeling very pleased, cracked his whip and called out, "Gee, woh! all my horses!"

"You mustn't say that," said Big Klaus, "you know only one is yours."

But when some more church people went by Little Klaus forgot he was not to say that, and again called out, "Gee, woh! all my horses!"

"Now I shall trouble you not to say that," said Big Klaus; "because if you say it once more I will kill your horse, and there is an end of it."

"I promise I won't say it again," said Little Klaus; but when people again passed, and they nodded "How are you," he felt so proud, and thought it looked so grand to have five horses to plough with, that he again cracked his whip and called out, "Gee, woh! all my horses!"

"I will 'Gee, woh!' your horses, I will," said Big Klaus, and seizing a big wooden club, struck Little Klaus's only horse on the head and it fell down dead.

<sup>1</sup> A custom not uncommon in Scandinavia. — Tr.



"Oh dear! oh dear! now I have no horse," said Little Klaus, and began to cry. Then he flayed the horse, dried the skin well, put it in a sack, which he flung on his back, and set out for the town to sell it.

He had a long way to walk, and the road lay through a big, dark forest, when a terrible storm came on. He lost his way, and before he found it again evening set in, and he was too far away from the town and his own home to reach either before nightfall.

Close to the road lay a big farm; the shutters were closed, but the light within penetrated through the chinks above.



"There I may be allowed to remain for the night," thought Little Klaus, and went up and knocked at the door.

The farmer's wife unlocked it, but having heard his supplication, asked him to be off, as her husband was away and she did not want any guests.

"Well, I must stay outside then," said Little Klaus; and the farmer's wife shut the door in his face.

Close by stood a haystack, and between that and the house, there was a little shed with a flat thatched roof.

"I can sleep up there," said Little Klaus, seeing the roof. "It is a fine bed; but I hope the stork won't come down and bite my legs." For on the roof stood a live stork which had its nest there.

So Little Klaus climbed up on to the shed, where he lay for a while, turning hither and thither to find a comfortable place. The shutters



before the windows did not quite close at the top, so that he could see straight into the room.

There was a big table laid, with wine, roast beef, and a splendid fish. The farmer's wife and the sexton were alone at table, and she filled his glass, while he made short work of the fish, as that was something he was very fond of.

"Oh, if I could only get a bit!" said Little Klaus, stretching his head right opposite the window. Oh, what a delicious cake he also saw! There was, indeed, a feast!

Then he heard somebody approaching on horseback in the road; it was the farmer coming home.

He was a very kind fellow, but had the peculiar weakness of not being able to tolerate sextons. If he saw one he became nearly mad with rage. It was for this reason that the sexton had called on his wife when he knew the farmer was away, and of course the good woman had put before him the best things she had got.

When they heard the husband coming they became so frightened that the wife asked the sexton to hide in a big, empty trunk standing in a corner, which he did, knowing that the poor husband could not bear the sight of a sexton. The woman quickly hid all the choice dishes and the wine in the oven, as, if her husband had seen them, he was sure to have asked what they meant.

"Oh, oh!" sighed Little Klaus on the roof, when he saw all the good things disappear.

"Is there anybody up there?" asked the farmer, looking up at Little Klaus. "Why do you lie there? Much better for you to come indoors." And Little Klaus told him how he had lost his way, and begged him to let him stay the night.

"Certainly," said the farmer. "But we must first have something to eat."

The wife received them both most kindly, laid the table, and gave them a big dish of porridge. The farmer was hungry and eat with good appetite; but Little Klaus could not get the thought out of his mind of the splendid roast beef, the fish, and the cake, which he knew were in the oven.

Under the table by his feet he had flung the sack containing the horse-hide, which we know he had with him to sell in town. The porridge would not go down; so he trod on the sack, and the dry hide in it crackled quite audibly.



"Be quiet," said Little Klaus, but trod at the same moment again on it, so that it crackled louder than before.

"What have you got in your sack?" asked the farmer.

"Oh, it's a sorcerer," said Little Klaus. "He says that we ought not to eat porridge, as he has filled the whole oven with roast beef, fish, and cake by his sorcery."

"What!" exclaimed the farmer, and opened the door, where he beheld all the choice food his wife had hidden, but which he believed were brought there by sorcery. The wife did not dare to say anything, but placed the food at once on the table; and so they eat both the fish and the beef, and the cake into the bargain.

Again Little Klaus trod on the sack, making the hide crackle.

"What does he say now?" asked the farmer.

"He says he has also brought us three bottles of wine, which are in the oven."

The wife had to produce the wine she had hidden, and the farmer drank and became quite merry; such a sorcerer as that Little Klaus had in his sack he would much like to possess.

"Can he call up the devil, too?" asked the farmer. "I would like to see him as I am merry now."

"I tell you," said Little Klaus, "my sorcerer can do everything I command. Cannot you?" he inquired, treading on the sack so that it crackled. "Can you hear him saying yes? But the devil is so ugly that you had better not see him."

"Oh, I am not afraid; I only wonder what he is like."

"Why, he is exactly like a sexton!"

"Whew!" said the farmer; "that is awful. I must tell you I cannot bear the sight of a sexton. But never mind, now when I know it is the devil I think I can stand it better. I am not afraid now; but he mustn't come too near."

"Well, I will ask my sorcerer," said Little Klaus, treading again on the sack and listening.

"Well, what does he say?"

"He says that if you open the trunk in the corner there, you will see the devil crouching inside, but keep the lid well down, so that he does not escape."

"Will you not help me to keep it down?" said the farmer, going toward the trunk where his wife had hidden the real sexton, who sat there trembling in his shoes.



The farmer lifted the lid a little and peeped underneath it.

"Whew!" he exclaimed, and started back. "Yes, indeed, I did see him; he is exactly like our own sexton. How awful!"

After that they required something more to drink, and so they made merry till far into the night.

"You must sell me that sorcerer," said the farmer. "Ask as much as you like. I will give you a whole bushel of money down."

"No, I cannot," said Little Klaus; "only think of what great use he is to me!"

"I should so much like to have him," said the farmer, continuing to press him.

"Well," said Little Klaus at last, "since you have been so good as to give me shelter for the night, I must agree to it. You shall have the sorcerer for a bushel of money; but I want it heaped up."

"You shall have it," said the farmer; "but you must also take away that trunk there; I won't have it an hour longer in the house; I don't know whether he is n't there still."

Little Klaus handed the farmer the sack with the dry hide, and received in exchange a whole bushel of money, and that heaped up too. The farmer also gave him a large wheelbarrow to carry the money and the trunk on.

"Good-by," said Little Klaus, wheeling off with the money and the big trunk in which the sexton was still sitting.

On the other side of the forest was a deep, wide river, where the current was so strong that hardly any swimmer could breast it. A large new bridge had been built across it, on the middle of which Little Klaus halted and said so loudly that the sexton could hear him: —

"What am I to do with this stupid trunk? It is as heavy as if it were full of stones. I am quite tired of wheeling it longer, and shall pitch it into the river. If it then floats home to my house it is all right; if not, never mind."





He seized the trunk with one hand, and lifted it up as if about to pitch it into the water.

"Halloo! Stop! Stop!" roared the sexton in the trunk. "Let me get out first!"

"Whew!" exclaimed Little Klaus, pretending to be frightened; "he is still there. I shall throw the trunk into the river at once and drown him."

"No, no, for heaven's sake!" roared the sexton. "I will give you a whole bushel of money if you don't."

"That's quite a different matter," said Little Klaus, and opened the trunk.

The sexton at once crawled out, shoved the empty trunk into the water, and went home, where Little Klaus received a whole bushel full of money. One bushel he had already received of the farmer, and now he had the whole barrow full of money.

"Well, that horse was well paid," he said to himself when he came home and piled all the money in a heap on the floor. "Big Klaus will get into a rage when he hears how rich my only horse has made me; but I shall not tell it to him straight."

He then sent a boy to Big Klaus to borrow a bushel measure.

"I wonder what he wants that for, now?" said Big Klaus to himself, and smeared some tar over the bottom, so that a little of what was measured should stick; and so it did. When he received the measure back, three new silver coins stuck to the bottom.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Big Klaus, and ran at once across to Little Klaus. "Where have you got all that money from?"

"Why, I got it for the hide of my horse, which I sold last night."

"That was indeed well paid," said Big Klaus. He hurried home, and seizing an axe killed all his four horses, flayed them, and drove with the hides to the town.

"Hides! Hides! Who will buy hides?" he cried in the streets.

All the bootmakers and tanners came running up inquiring what the price was.

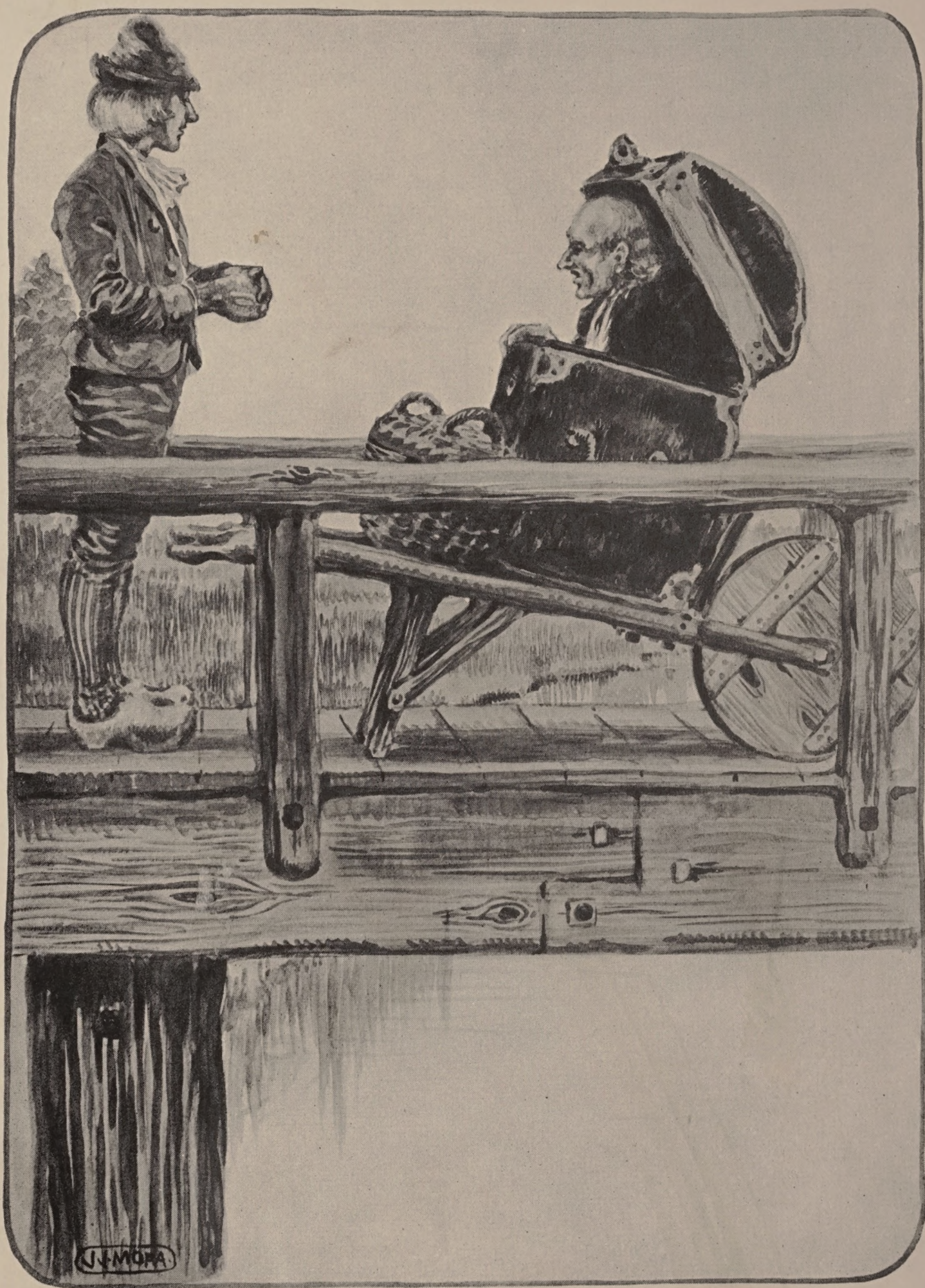
"A bushel of money for each," said Big Klaus.

"Are you mad?" they all asked. "Do you think we have money by the bushel?"

"Hides! Hides! Who will buy hides?" he called out again; but to all who asked the price he replied, "A bushel of money."

"He is making fools of us," they all said; and so the bootmakers











seized their thongs and the tanners their leather aprons and began to belabor Big Klaus.

"Hides! Hides!" they cried sneeringly. "Yes, we will tan your hide for you. Out of the town with him!" they shouted; and Big Klaus had to make the best use of his legs. Such a thrashing he had never had in his life.

"Very well," he said to himself when he reached home. "I'll make Little Klaus smart for this; I'll kill him for his trouble."

Now it happened that in the mean time Little Klaus's old grandmother had died; and although she had been very unkind to him, he took her death much to heart, and placed the old woman in his own warm bed to try if he could not bring life into her again. She was to stay there all the night, while he would sleep on a chair in the corner, as he had done many a time before.

As he sat thus in the night, the door opened and Big Klaus entered with an axe. He knew quite well where Little Klaus's bed stood, and went straight up to it and struck the dead old grandmother with the axe on the head, in the belief that it was Little Klaus.

"Take that!" he said; "now we shall see whether you'll make a fool of me a second time." And so he went home.

"He is really a bad, wicked man," said Little Klaus. "He wanted to kill me; and it was well that old granny was dead, or else he would have killed her."

He then dressed the old grandmother in her Sunday best, borrowed a horse from a neighbor, which he put to a cart, and placed her in the back seat, so that she should not fall out while driving; and so he set out through the forest. When the sun rose, they were outside a big inn, where Little Klaus stopped to get some refreshment.

The innkeeper was a very, very rich man, and a good fellow into the bargain, but as quick-tempered as if he had gunpowder in his body.

"Good morning," he said to Little Klaus. "How early you have got your Sunday clothes on!"

"Yes," said Little Klaus, "I am on the way to the town with my old grandmother, who is sitting out in the cart, but I cannot persuade her to come inside. Won't you take her out a drop of something? But you must speak loud, as she is nearly deaf."

"I am sure I shall be delighted," said the innkeeper, and filled a glass of rum, which he carried to the dead grandmother, who was sitting bolt upright in the cart.



"Here's a glass of rum from your son," he said; but the dead woman said nothing, and sat very quiet.

"Don't you hear?" he shouted as loud as he could. "Here is a glass of rum from your son!"

Once more he repeated his request, and once again; but when she did not move at all, he lost his temper and threw the glass right into her face, so that the rum ran down her nose, and she fell backward into the cart. She was, of course, only seated upright, and not tied to the cart.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Little Klaus, who ran out and caught the innkeeper by the collar. "You have killed my grandmother! Look! she has a big hole in the head."

"Dear me, dear me! what a misfortune!" cried the innkeeper, clasping his hands. "It's all caused through my temper. My dear Klaus, I'll give you a whole bushel of money, and bury your grandmother as if she were my own, if you will hold your tongue; otherwise they will cut my head off,<sup>1</sup> and that's nasty."

So Little Klaus was paid a whole bushel full of money, and the innkeeper buried the old grandmother as if she were his own.



When Little Klaus came home again with all the money, he at once sent his boy across to Big Klaus, to ask him to lend him a measure.

"What does this mean?" said Big Klaus. "Have n't I killed him? I will go and see myself." And he went across to Little Klaus with the measure.

"But where have you got all that money from?" he asked, with eyes wide-open, seeing the heap which had been added.

"It was my grandmother, not me, you killed," said Little Klaus, "and I have sold her for a bushel of money."

"That was indeed well paid," said Big Klaus, and hurrying home, seized an axe and killed his grandmother, whom he then laid on a cart, drove to the town, to the druggist's, and asked him if he would buy a dead body.

<sup>1</sup> The way the extreme penalty of the law is carried out in Scandinavia. — TR.



"Who is she, and where have you got her from?" asked the druggist.

"She is my grandmother; I have killed her to get a bushel of money for her."

"The Lord forbid!" said the druggist. "What are you saying? Don't say that to anybody; it might cost you your head." And then he told him what a frightful crime he had committed, what a wicked man he was, and that he ought to be punished.

Big Klaus became so frightened at these words that he ran out of the shop, jumped into his cart, lashed the horses, and drove home as fast as they would run. But the druggist and everybody else thought he was mad, and therefore let him go where he liked.

"You shall pay for this," said Big Klaus, when he was again on the high-road. "Yes, you shall pay for it, my dear Little Klaus." And when he got home, he took the biggest sack he could find, and walked across to Little Klaus, saying, "You have made a fool of me a second time. First I killed my horses, then my old grandmother. It is all your fault; but you shall not make a fool of me again." And so he seized Little Klaus round the waist and put him in the sack, which he flung across his shoulder, saying, "Now, I am going to drown you."

He had a long way to walk before he reached the river, and Little Klaus was no light weight. The road lay by a church, in which the organ sent forth music and the people sang so beautifully that Big Klaus put the sack with Little Klaus in it down by the church door, thinking he would like to go in and hear a hymn before proceeding. Little Klaus could of course not get out, and everybody was inside; so he went in.

"Oh, dear me! dear me!" Little Klaus sighed in the sack, turning and twisting; but he could not untie the string.

At that moment an old drover, with silvery hair and a long staff, went by. He was driving a whole herd of cattle, and the animals ran up against the sack in which Little Klaus sat, upsetting it.

"Oh, dear me!" Little Klaus sighed. "To be so young, and to have to go to heaven!"

"And I, wretch," said the drover, "am so old, and yet cannot get there!"

"Untie the sack," cried Little Klaus, "and crawl in in my place, and you will at once go to heaven."



"I will do that with all my heart," said the drover, untying the sack, from which Little Klaus jumped at once.

"You'll take care of the cattle for me," said the old drover, crawling into the sack, which Little Klaus tied up, and then went away with the cattle.

Shortly afterward Big Klaus came out of church and flung the sack on his back, thinking, however, that it had become rather light, as the old drover was not more than half the weight of Little Klaus. "How light he has become!" thought Big Klaus; "but perhaps it is through my having heard a hymn." And then he went to the river, which was both deep and wide, and throwing the sack with the old drover in it into the water, shouted, in the belief that it was Little Klaus, "Now I think you won't make a fool of me again!"

He then set out for home; but having reached a spot where two roads met, he beheld Little Klaus driving his cattle before him.

"What's this?" said Big Klaus. "Have n't I drowned you?"

"You did," said Little Klaus; "only half an hour ago you threw me into the river."

"But where have you got all those fine cattle from?" asked Big Klaus.

"It's water-cattle," said Little Klaus. "You shall hear everything; and many thanks for drowning me, as now I am rich, I can tell you. I was very frightened being in the sack, and the wind whistled about my ears as you threw me from the bridge into the cold water. I sank at once to the bottom, but without hurting myself, as the softest grass grows there, and on that I fell. Immediately the sack was untied, and the loveliest maiden, in snow-white garments, and with a green wreath around her wet hair, took me by the hand and said, 'Is that you, Little Klaus? Here you have a few cattle for a start. A mile farther on you will find another herd, of which I also make you a present.' Then I saw that the river was a big main-road for the people of the sea. On the bottom they walked, and drove right away from the sea far into the country where the river rises. There were such lovely flowers and the freshest grass, and the fish swimming in the water shot past my ears as the birds do here in the air. And what a quantity of fine people there were, and what herds of cattle were grazing by the roadside!"

"But why did you return to us at once?" asked Big Klaus; "I would n't have done that if it was so pretty down there."

"Why," said Little Klaus, "don't you see how artful that was of me? I told you the maid said that a mile farther on the road — and by



road she means of course the river, as elsewhere she cannot get—a whole herd of cattle is waiting for me; but I know how the river winds, first hither then thither,—it is a nasty crooked road; so of course, in order to shorten the way, I get up on dry land, where I can make a short cut from one bend to another, as in that manner I saye quite a mile, and reach my cattle sooner.”

“You are a lucky dog, indeed,” said Big Klaus. “Do you think I should get some sea-cattle too, if I go down to the bottom of the river?”

“I have n’t the least doubt about it,” said Little Klaus. “But you are too heavy for me to carry to the river in a sack; however, if you



will walk there, and then get into the sack, I will throw you in with great pleasure.”

“Thank you, really,” said Big Klaus. “But if I don’t get sea-cattle when I am down there, I’ll give you a jolly good thrashing, depend upon it!”

“Oh, don’t be so cruel!”

So they went to the river, and as soon as the cattle, being thirsty, saw the water, they ran as fast as they could, to drink.

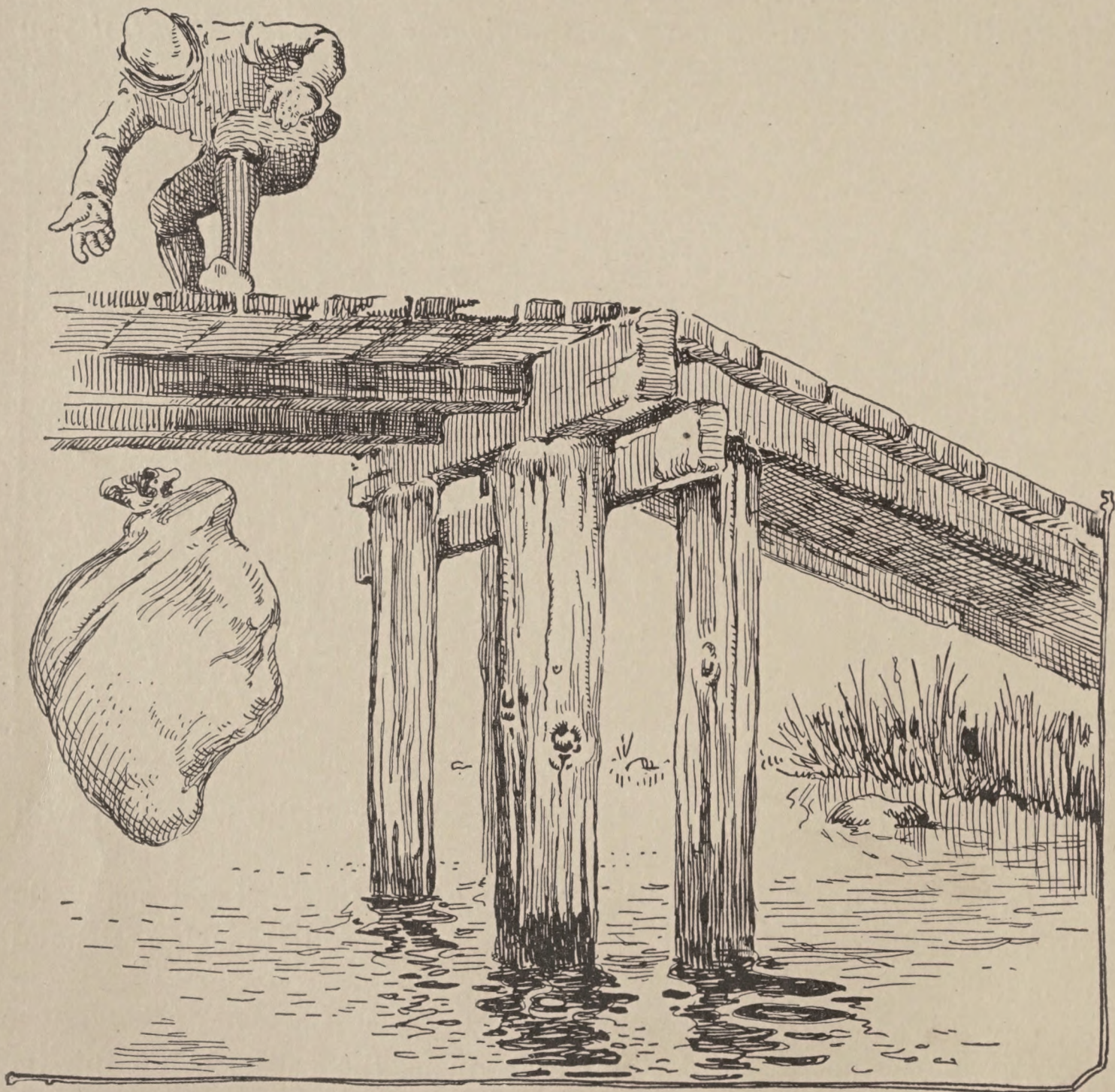
“Just see what a hurry they are in to get to the bottom again,” said Little Klaus.



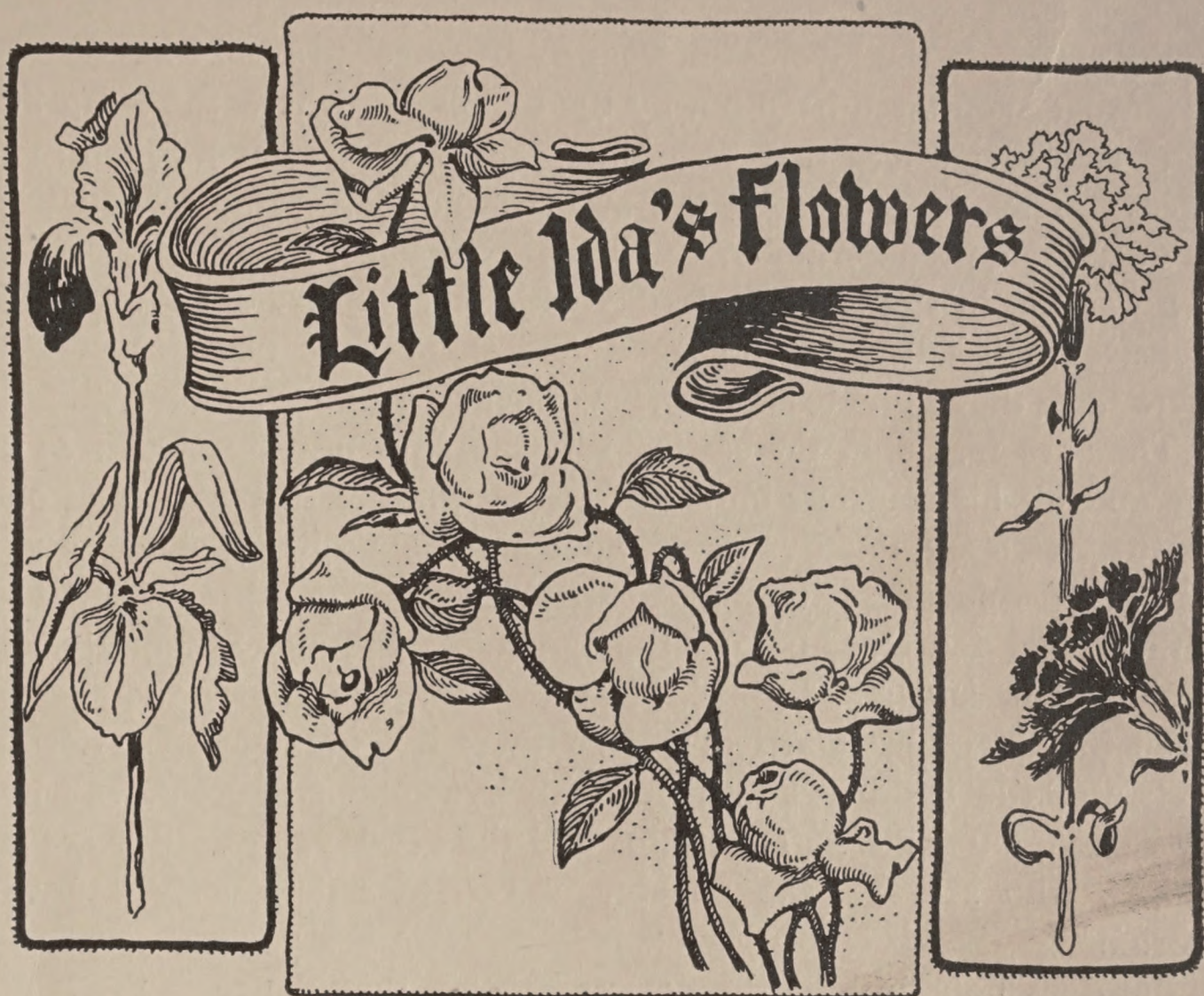
"Yes, I see," said Big Klaus; "but now help me first, or else you'll get a whacking." And so he crawled into a big sack which had been lying on the back of one of the bullocks. "Put a stone into it, else I am afraid I shan't sink," said Big Klaus.

"Oh, yes, you will," said Little Klaus; but he nevertheless put a big stone into it, tied the string tight, and shoved it into the water. Splash! and Big Klaus lay in the river, sinking at once to the bottom.

"I am afraid he won't find the cattle," said Little Klaus, and drove home those he had.







"My poor flowers are quite dead," said little Ida. "They were so lovely last night, and now all the leaves are withered. Why is that?" she asked the student from the university, who was sitting on the sofa, for she was very fond of him; he knew all the pretty stories, and cut such amusing scraps for her, — hearts with old women dancing inside, flowers, and big castles, of which the doors opened. He was such a jolly and lively student.

"Why do the flowers look so wretched to-day?" she asked again, showing him a large bouquet all withered.

"Don't you know what's the matter with them?" said the student. "The flowers went to a dance last night; that's why they hang their heads."

"But flowers cannot dance," said little Ida.

"Oh, yes, they can," said the student; "when it's dark and we sleep, they run merrily about; almost every night they have a dance."

"Cannot any children go to the dance?"

"Yes," said the student, "tiny daisies and lilies-of-the-valley."



"But where do the loveliest flowers dance?" asked little Ida.

"Haven't you often been out by the big castle, where the King lives in the summer, where that beautiful park is with such a quantity of flowers? Haven't you seen the swans swimming towards you when you offer them bread-crumbs? Out there are balls, I can tell you."

"I was out in the park yesterday with mamma," said Ida; "but all the leaves had fallen off the trees, and there were no more flowers. Where have they gone to? In the summer there were so many."

"They are inside, in the castle," said the student. "As soon as the King and all his courtiers move into the town, the flowers run at once into the castle and make merry. That's something you would like to see. The two loveliest roses place themselves on the throne, and they are then King and Queen. All the red coxcombs range themselves by the side of it, and stand bowing; they are pages in waiting. Then all the prettiest flowers arrive, and so there is a great ball. The blue violets are little middies, and dance with hyacinths and crocuses, whom they call young ladies. The tulips and the great yellow lilies are old matrons, who see that the dancing is carried on properly and with decorum."

"But does nobody hurt the flowers because they dance in the King's castle?"

"No one really knows anything about it," said the student. "Sometimes certainly in the night the old steward comes to see that everything is all right out there, and he carries a large bunch of keys; but as soon as the flowers hear them jingle they become very quiet, and hide behind the long curtains with their heads stretched forward. 'I smell there are flowers here,' says the old steward, but he cannot see them."

"Oh, what fun!" said little Ida, clapping her hands. "But should I not be able to see the flowers either?"

"Oh, yes," said the student; "remember when you are again out there to peep through the windows; then you will see them sure enough. I did so to-day; there lay a long yellow lily stretched on the sofa; she fancied she was a maid of honor."

"And can the flowers in the Botanical Garden also get as far?"

"Oh, yes, certainly they can," said the student, "because they can fly when they like. Haven't you seen the lovely butterflies, red, yellow, and white? They look almost like flowers, and that is what they have been; they jumped from the stem high into the air, and flapped their leaves as if they were really tiny wings, and so they were off. And



when they behaved well, they were allowed to fly about in the daytime too, and had not to fly home again and sit quiet on the stem; and so at last the leaves became real wings. That you have seen yourself. But, of course, maybe the flowers in the Botanical Garden have never been out to the King's Castle, or know what merry-making goes on there of a night. Therefore I'll tell you something which will astonish the Professor of Botany, who lives close by; you know him, don't you? When you go into his garden, you tell one of the flowers that there is a great ball out at the castle, and she will tell it to all the others, and then they will fly off. When the Professor comes into his garden, there will not be a single flower left, and he cannot understand where they have gone."

"But how can the flower tell the others? Flowers cannot talk?"

"No, that is true," said the student, "but they can make signs. Haven't you noticed when there is a little wind the flowers nod and move their green leaves? That is as good as speaking."

"And does the Professor understand the signs?" asked Ida.

"Oh, yes, certainly he does. One morning when he came into the garden he saw a great nettle making signs to a beautiful red carnation, meaning, 'You are very pretty, and I love you dearly.' That sort of thing the Professor cannot bear; so he slapped the nettle on the leaves, as they are its fingers, and stung himself, and since then he never ventures to touch a nettle."

"Oh, what fun!" cried little Ida, laughing.

"How can any one make the child believe such nonsense!" said the tedious chancery counsellor, who had come to pay a call, and was sitting on the sofa. He did not like the student, and always grumbled when he saw him cutting out the funny scraps, — now a fellow hanging in the gallows with a heart in his hand, as he was a robber of hearts, now an old witch riding on a broom with her husband on her nose. This the counsellor couldn't bear, and used to say, as now, "How can anybody make the child believe such nonsense? It is all that stupid imagination."

But still little Ida thought that what the student related about her flowers was very funny, and she pondered a good deal over it. The flowers hung their heads because they were tired from dancing all the night; they were certainly ill. So she carried them to her other playthings, which stood on a little pretty table, the drawer of which was quite full of lovely things. In the doll's bed lay her doll Sophy; but



little Ida said to her, "You must really get up, Sophy, and be contented with lying in the drawer to-night, because the poor flowers are ill, and must lie in your bed, which will perhaps put them right again." And she raised the doll, which looked sulky, and did not say a word, as she was angry because she could not keep her bed.

Then Ida laid the flowers in the doll's bed, drew the little cover over them, and told them to lie very quiet, and she would make them some tea, so that they might be quite well the next morning and get up again. She then drew the curtains round the bed so that the sun should not shine in their eyes.

All the evening she could not get out of her head what the student had told her; and before she had to go to bed herself she was obliged to peep behind the window curtain, where her mother's flowers stood in pots, — hyacinths as well as tulips, — and whisper quite softly, "I know you're a-going to a dance to-night." But the flowers looked as if they did not understand anything of what she said, and did not move a leaf; but little Ida knew what she knew, for all that.

When she was in bed she thought for a long time what a pretty sight it would be to see the lovely flowers dance out there in the King's castle. "I just wonder whether *my* flowers took part in it?" she said to herself, and then went to sleep.

In the night she awoke; she had dreamt about the flowers and the student, about whom the counsellor had grumbled, saying he was only trying to make her believe a lot of nonsense. It was very quiet in the room where little Ida lay; the night-light burned on the table, and her father and mother were asleep.

"I wonder whether my flowers are still lying in Sophy's bed?" she said to herself. "Oh, I wish I knew!"

She raised herself up a little in bed, and looked toward the door, which was half open; in there lay the flowers and all her playthings. She listened, and thought she heard the piano played in the next room, but quite softly, and more beautifully than she had ever heard it before.

"Now all the flowers in there are no doubt dancing," she said. "Oh, how I wish I could see them!" But she dared not get up, as then she would have awakened her father and mother. "If they only would come in here!" she said. But the flowers came not, and the music continued so beautifully. At last she could not keep quiet any longer; it was too lovely. So she crept out of her little bed, went softly across



the floor, and peeped into the room. Oh, what a lovely sight she beheld!

There was no night-light there; still it was quite light. The moon shone through the window on to the floor; it was nearly as bright as daylight. All the hyacinths and tulips stood in two rows on the floor; there were none in the windows, only the empty pots. On the floor all the flowers danced so prettily about and formed quite a chain, holding each other by the long green leaves when they turned. But at the piano sat a big yellow lily which Ida was sure she had seen in the summer, as she remembered quite well that the student had said about her, "Oh, how she is like Miss Lina!" and then everybody laughed at him; but now Ida herself thought that the long yellow flower really was like the young lady, and she behaved exactly like her while playing, — bent her long yellow face first on one then on the other side, nodding the time to the beautiful music. Nobody noticed little Ida. Then she saw a big blue crocus jump right on to the table where the playthings stood, go straight up to the doll's bed and draw aside the curtains; there lay the sick flowers, but they rose at once and nodded to the others that they too wanted to share in the dance. The old porcelain shepherd on the mantel-piece, on whom the under-lip had been broken, stood up and bowed to the pretty flowers, which now did not look at all ill, but jumped down to the others and were right merry.

It sounded as if something fell from the table. Ida looked thither: it was the shrove-tide fagot<sup>1</sup> which had jumped down; it considered itself belonging to the flowers. It was also very pretty, and at the end of it there was a little wax-doll, with a broad-brimmed hat just like that the counsellor used to wear. The fagot jumped on its three red legs among the flowers and stamped heavily; it danced the mazurka, which the flowers could not dance, as they were so light and could not stamp.

The wax-doll on the fagot became suddenly big and long, twisted round above the paper flowers crying out quite aloud, "How can any one make the child believe such nonsense! it is only that stupid imagination." And now the wax-doll was exactly like the old counsellor with the broad-brimmed hat, looking just as yellow and fretful. But the paper flowers beat it around the thin legs, and then it shrunk and

<sup>1</sup> It is the custom for children in Scandinavia to make an ornamented fagot of twigs at shrove-tide, wherewith those who can be surprised in bed asleep are struck, the victim having to pay forfeit in buns. — TR.



became again the little wax-doll. It was all so funny that little Ida could not help laughing. The fagot continued to dance, and the counsellor had to dance too whether he would or not; whether he made himself big and long, or remained the little yellow wax-doll with the big black hat. In the same moment there was a hard knock in the drawer where Ida's doll, Sophy, lay with all the other playthings. The shepherd ran as fast as he could to the edge of the table, lay down flat, and opened the drawer a little. Then Sophy got up and looked about quite surprised.

"Why, there seems to be a dance here!" she said. "Why did n't somebody tell me?"

"Will you dance with me?" said the shepherd.

"Oh, *you* are a nice fellow to dance with, indeed!" she said, and turned her back upon him. Then she sat down on the drawer, thinking that one of the flowers should come and engage her; but no one came. So she began to cough, "Hem, hem, hem!" but no one came all the same. The shepherd now danced quite alone, and not so badly either.

As none of the flowers seemed to notice Sophy, she let herself fall flop on the floor with a great noise, and that brought all the flowers around her asking if she had hurt herself, and they were very kind and polite to her, especially those which had occupied her bed; but she was not hurt in the least. And all Ida's flowers thanked her for her nice bed, became very fond of her, took her out on the floor where the moon shone, and danced with her, while the rest of the flowers danced in a ring around them; and now Sophy was so pleased that she said they might have her bed with pleasure; she was quite content with lying in the drawer. But the flowers said, "Very many thanks, but we cannot live so long; to-morrow we shall be dead. But tell little Ida to bury us in the garden where the canary lies, and we shall grow again next summer and be much prettier."

"But you must not die!" said Sophy, kissing the flowers. At the same moment the door opened and a whole host of lovely flowers came dancing in. Ida could not understand whence they came; they were, no doubt, the flowers from the King's castle. In front walked two lovely roses with golden crowns on their heads, — it was the King and Queen, — and behind them followed the sweetest narcissus and pinks, which bowed to both sides. They had music with them, great poppies and peonies blowing on pea-shells till they were quite red in the face,



while the bluebells and snow-drops jingled exactly like metal bells. It was a merry music. After them came many other flowers, and they all danced,—the blue violets and the red amaranths, the daisies and the lilies-of-the-valley; and they all kissed each other. It was too delightful to look at.

At last the flowers bid good-night to each other, and then little Ida crept back to her bed, where she dreamt of all she had seen.

As soon as she was dressed the next morning she went to the little table to see if the flowers were still there. She drew the curtains from



the little bed; and, yes, there they all lay, but they were quite withered,—a great deal more so than the day before. Sophy lay in the drawer where she had put her, and looked quite sleepy.

“Do you remember what you were to tell me?” asked little Ida; but Sophy only looked stupid and did not answer.

“You are not at all kind,” said Ida, “although everybody danced with you.” She then took a little cardboard box on which pretty little birds were painted, opened it, and laid the dead flowers therein. “That will be a fine coffin,” she said; “and when my Norwegian cousins come, they shall help me to bury you in the garden, so that you may grow up next summer and become much prettier.”

The Norwegian cousins were two lively boys, John and Adolphus, whom their father had given a cross-bow each, which they had brought to show Ida.



She told them about the poor flowers which were now dead, and so they were allowed to bury them. The two boys walked in front with their cross-bows on their shoulders, and little Ida behind with the dead flowers in the little pretty box. They dug a small grave in the garden, and having kissed the flowers, placed the box in the earth, and the cousins fired their bows over the grave, as they had neither rifles nor guns.







ONCE upon a time there was a woman who wished so much to have a baby; but she did not know where to get it from, so she went to an old witch, and said to her, "I wish so very much to have a baby; do tell me how I can get one."

"Oh, yes, that can easily be managed," said the witch. "Here is a barleycorn, but of quite a different kind to those the farmer grows in his fields or the hens get to eat. Put it in a flower-pot, and you shall see what you shall see."

"Many thanks," said the woman, gave the witch some money, and went home and sowed the barleycorn. Immediately a large, magnificent flower sprang up, looking exactly like a tulip, but the petals of the flower were closed, as if it were still in bud.

"That is a lovely flower," said the woman, kissing the beautiful red and yellow petals; but just as she did so the flower burst open with a loud bang. Everybody could now see that it was a real tulip; but in the middle of it sat a tiny, tiny girl, so pretty and so delicate; and being only the length of a thumb, she was called Lizzie Thumb.

She had a fine lacquered walnut-shell for a cradle, blue violet-leaves were her mattress, and a rose-leaf was her coverlet. There she slept at night; but in the daytime she played on the table, on which the mother had placed a plateful of water with flowers all round the edges. In the middle floated a large tulip-leaf, and on this Lizzie Thumb sat, sailing from one side of the plate to the other, having two white straws to row with. It was *such* a pretty sight! And she could sing too, and oh, how sweetly! Nobody had ever heard anything like it.

One night, while she was lying in her pretty bed, an ugly toad jumped in through the window, where a pane was broken. The toad was so ugly, big, and wet, and jumped right on to the table where Lizzie Thumb lay sleeping under the pink rose-leaf.



"That will be a charming wife for my son," said the toad, and seizing the walnut-shell, in which Lizzie Thumb was sleeping, jumped with it through the window into the garden below.

There flowed a big river there; but near the shore it was swampy and muddy, and here the toad lived with her son. Whew! how ugly he was too; exactly like his mother.

"Coax, coax, brecke-ke-kex!" was all he could say when he saw the little pretty girl in the walnut-shell.

"Don't speak so loud, or you'll wake her," said the old toad; "she might get away even now, for she is as light as swan's-down. We will put her out in the river on one of the big water-lily leaves. It will be like being on an island to her, who is so small and light, and from there she cannot get away; and in the mean time we shall be at work preparing the best room under the mud, where you are to live."

Out in the river there grew such a lot of water-lilies with big, green leaves, looking as if they floated in the water. The leaf which was farthest out was the biggest, and thither the old toad swam with the walnut-shell in which Lizzie Thumb lay.

The poor little mite awoke quite early, and seeing where she was, began to cry most bitterly, as there was water on all sides of the big leaf so that she could not get ashore.

The old toad sat down in the mud, decorating the room with rushes and yellow water-lilies, so that everything should be very smart for her new daughter-in-law, and when all was ready swam with her ugly son out to the leaf, where Lizzie Thumb stood. They were first to fetch her pretty bed, which was to be placed in the bridal chamber, before she came herself.

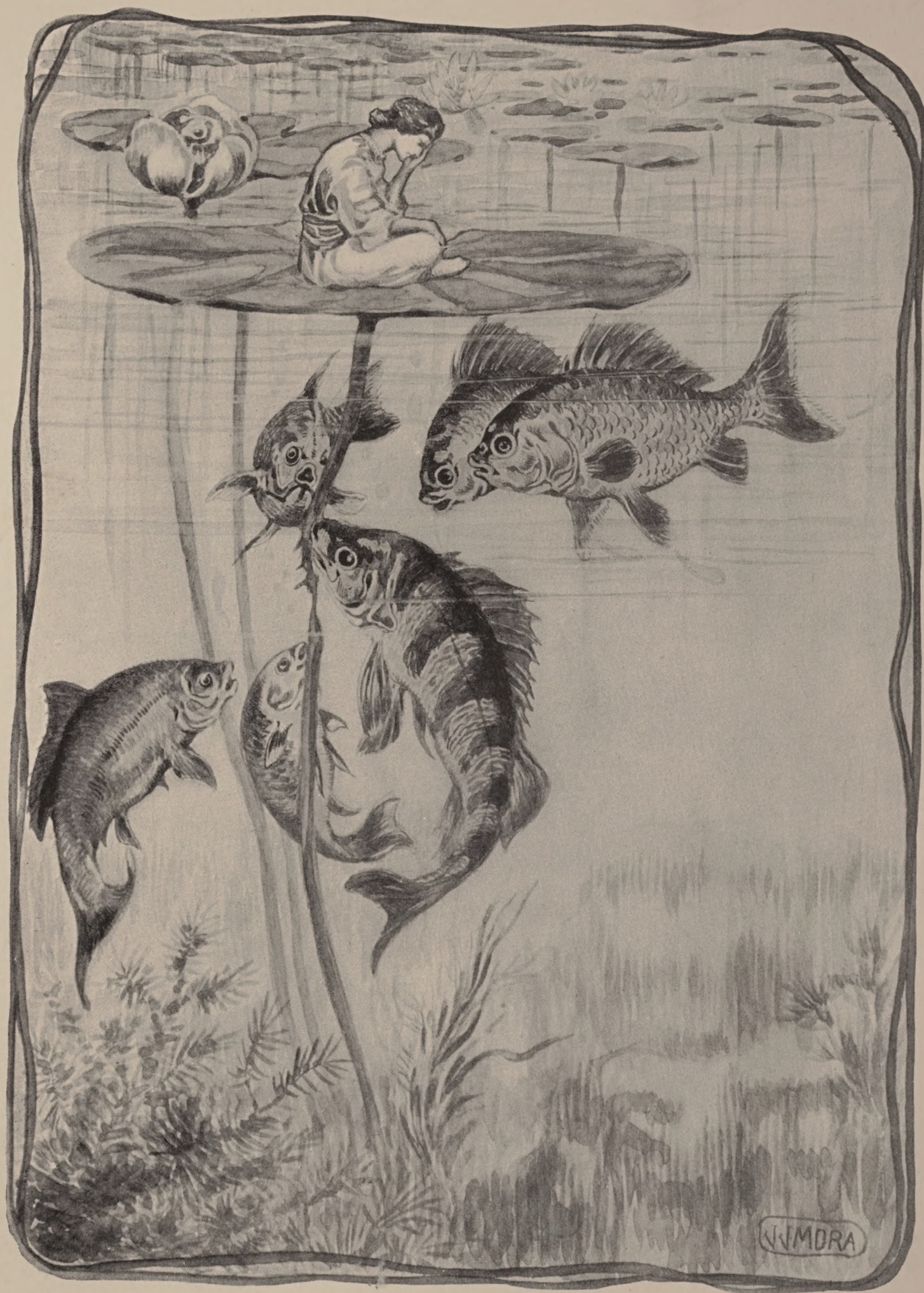
The old toad bowed low to her and said, "Here is my son, who is to be your husband; and you will be most comfortable down in the mud."

"Coax, coax! brecke-ke-kex!" was all the son could say.

And so they took the pretty little bed and swam away with it, while Lizzie Thumb sat all alone on the green leaf crying, as she would not live with the ugly toad or have her son for a husband.

The little fishes swimming about in the water had no doubt seen the toad and heard what she said; so they popped their heads out of the water, waiting to see the little girl. As soon as they saw her they thought her so pretty that they felt quite grieved she should have to go down and live with the ugly toad. "No, that they never would











allow." So they gathered round the green stalk of the leaf on which Lizzie Thumb was sitting, and gnawed it through, so that the leaf floated down the river far away, where the toad could not reach it.

Lizzie Thumb floated past so many places, and the little birds which sat in the trees saw her and sang, "What a pretty little girl!" And the leaf floated farther and farther away, and thus Lizzie Thumb reached foreign parts.

A pretty little butterfly kept fluttering around her, and finally alighted on the leaf, as it liked little Lizzie Thumb very much, who was now so happy because the toad could not reach her, and it was so



lovely where she floated. The sun shone on the water, its rays glittering like gold.

Then she took her girdle, fastened one end around the butterfly and the other to the leaf, which then moved much faster, as well as herself.

Suddenly a big cockchafer came along buzzing, and seeing Lizzie Thumb, at once caught hold of her slender waist with its claws, and flew with her into a tree. The green leaf floated on down the river, and the butterfly too, for it was tied to it and could not get away.

Oh, how frightened poor Lizzie Thumb was when the cockchafer carried her up into the tree! But she was still more grieved for the beautiful white butterfly she had tied to the leaf, as it could not get away and therefore would starve to death. But the cockchafer asked



no questions as to that. He placed her on the biggest green leaf in the tree, gave her honey from the flowers to eat, telling her she was really lovely, although not like a cockchafer. Later on all the other cockchafers living in the tree came to pay a call; they examined Lizzie Thumb, and the cockchafer maids turned up their feelers and said: "Why, she has only two legs! How ridiculous that looks! And she has no feelers! How small she is round the waist! How horrible! She looks like a human being. How ugly she is!" they all cried; and still Lizzie Thumb was so very lovely. And so thought the cockchafer who had carried her off; but as they all said she was ugly, he believed them at last, and would not have her: she might go where she liked. They now carried her down from the tree, and placed her on a chickweed, where she sat crying because she was so ugly that the cockchafer would not have her; and still she was the loveliest little thing any one could imagine, as delicate and soft as the most beautiful rose-leaf.

All through the summer poor Lizzie Thumb lived quite alone in the big forest. She twined herself a bed of grass-blades, which she hung up under a big burdock-leaf where the rain could not reach her; she eat the honey from the flowers, and drank the dew which every morning fell on the leaves. Thus summer and autumn passed by; but then came the winter, — the long, cold winter. All the birds, which had sung so beautifully to her, departed; the trees and flowers withered; the big burdock-leaf under which she had lived shrivelled up, and only a yellow withered stalk remained; and she felt the cold most dreadfully, as her clothes were torn, and she was so delicate and tiny, poor Lizzie Thumb! that she would doubtless perish from cold. It began to snow, and every flake which touched her was like a shovelful thrown at one of us, because we are big; but poor little Lizzie was only a thumb in height. Then she wrapped herself in a withered leaf, but it did not warm her, and she shook with cold.

Just out of the forest where she now was, lay a big cornfield, but the corn was removed long ago, and only the naked dry stubble rose from the frozen earth. The stubble was like a big forest for her to wander in, and, oh, how she shook with cold! Then she reached the door of the field-mouse, a hole under the stubble, where the mouse had warm and snug quarters, the whole room being full of corn, — a fine larder and kitchen! Poor Lizzie Thumb slunk inside the door like any other beggar-girl, and begged for a small piece of barleycorn, as she had not eaten anything for two days.











"You poor little thing!" said the mouse, for at heart she was really a kind old field-mouse, "step into my warm room and eat with me." And as she liked Lizzie Thumb very much, she said, "You may stay with me through the winter, on condition that you keep my room clean and nice and tell me stories, for those I am very fond of."

And Lizzie Thumb did as the good old field-mouse desired, and fared very well with her.

"Now we shall soon have company," said the field-mouse; "my neighbor comes to see me once a week. He is much better off than I am, has large rooms, and wears such a beautiful black fur coat. If you could only get him for a husband you would be well provided for, but he is blind. You must tell him all the loveliest stories you know."



But Lizzie Thumb was not at all anxious about this, and would not marry the neighbor, as he was a mole. He came and paid a visit in his black fur coat; he was so rich and so learned, said the field-mouse; his dwelling was twenty times larger than the field-mouse's, and he had learning, he had. But the sun and the lovely flowers he could not bear, but always sneered at them, as he had never seen either. Lizzie Thumb sang to him, and had to sing both "Lady bird, lady bird, fly away," and other songs, so that the mole fell in love with her through her sweet voice; but he said nothing, as he was a very prudent man. He had recently dug a little passage underground from his to their dwelling, in which the field-mouse and Lizzie Thumb were permitted to walk as often as they liked. But he asked them not to be afraid of the dead bird lying in the passage; it was a whole bird with feathers, beak, and



all, which had most probably died quite recently, at the beginning of the winter, and had been buried just where the mole had made his passage.

The mole took a bit of touchwood in his mouth, which shines like fire in the dark, and went in front to light them in the long, dark passage. When he reached the spot where the dead bird lay, the mole put his broad snout against the roof and threw up the earth so that there was a hole in the ground through which daylight could shine. In the middle of the passage lay a dead swallow, with its pretty wings pressed tight against its sides and its legs and head drawn in under the feathers. The poor bird had doubtless frozen to death. Lizzie Thumb felt quite grieved for it, because she loved all the little pretty birds so much; she remembered how they had sung and chirped to her during the long summer. But the mole kicked him with his short legs and said: "Now he won't pipe any more. How wretched it must be to be born a bird! Thank goodness, none of my children will! Why, a bird knows only its twittering, and in the winter dies of hunger."

"Yes, a sensible man like you may well say so," said the field-mouse. "What is a bird, for all its twittering, when the winter comes? It must starve and freeze; but that is something mighty and grand too, I suppose."

But Lizzie Thumb said nothing; however, as soon as they turned their backs to the bird she stooped down, pushed the feathers aside where the head was, and kissed it on the closed eyes.

"Perhaps it was you who sung so beautifully to me in the summer," she thought. "What pleasure the dear pretty bird gave me."

The mole now filled up the hole through which daylight penetrated, and then saw the ladies home.

But at night Lizzie Thumb could not sleep; so, getting up, she plaited a large, pretty mat of straw, and going down wrapped it around the dead bird, laying some soft wool at its sides so that it should lie warm in the cold earth.

"Good-by, you darling little bird," she said. "Good-by; and thanks for your beautiful song last summer when all the trees were green and the sun shone so warm upon us."

She then laid her head against the breast of the bird; but became at once terribly frightened, hearing something beat inside. It was the bird's heart. The bird was not dead, it was only in a trance, and being warmed had come to life again.



Little Lizzie quite trembled with fright, as the bird was so big, — so big compared with her, who was only the height of a thumb. But she gathered courage, pressed the wool closer to the poor swallow, fetched a mint-leaf which had been her own covering, and laid it over the bird's head.

The next night she again stole down to it, and now there was distinct life in the bird; but it was so exhausted that it could only open its eyes for a few moments to look at Lizzie Thumb, who had a piece of touch-wood in her hand, as there was no other candle.

"Thank you very, very much, you pretty little child," said the sick swallow to her. "I am beautifully warm now; I shall soon regain my strength and be able to fly out into the warm sunshine."

"Alas!" said little Lizzie, "it is so cold out there, it snows and freezes. You stay in your warm bed; I will take care of you."

She then brought the swallow some water in a leaf, and the bird drank, and told her how it had wounded its wing on the bramble, and therefore could not fly as fast as the other swallows when they departed to the warm lands far away. At last it had fallen to the ground; but more the bird could not recollect, and did not know how it had got where it was.

During the whole winter the bird stayed down there, and Lizzie Thumb was kind to it and loved it so dearly; but neither the mole nor the field-mouse knew anything of this, for they could not bear the poor wretched swallow.

As soon as spring came, and the warmth of the sun penetrated the earth, the swallow said good-by to Lizzie Thumb, who opened the hole the mole had made in the roof. The sun shone so beautifully down to them, and the swallow asked her if she would not come with it; she could sit on its back and they would fly far away into the green woods. But Lizzie Thumb knew that it would grieve the old field-mouse if she left her thus.

"No, I cannot," said Lizzie Thumb.

"Good-by, good-by, you dear, kind girl," said the swallow, and flew out into the sunshine.

Lizzie Thumb gazed longingly after the bird, and tears came into her eyes, for she loved the swallow so dearly.

"Quiwit, quiwit," twittered the bird, and flew into the green woods.

Lizzie Thumb was very sad; she was not allowed to go into the warm sunshine, as the corn sown in the field above the dwelling of the



field-mouse had shot up so high that it was quite a thick, big forest to the little girl who was only a thumb in height.

"You must work on your wedding outfit during the summer," said the field-mouse to her; for her neighbor, the tedious old mole with the black fur coat, had proposed to her. "You must have woollen as well as linen clothes, and plenty of everything, when you become the mole's wife."

Lizzie Thumb had to work at her spindle day and night, and the field-mouse hired four spiders besides to spin and weave day and night. Every evening the mole paid a visit, and was always saying that when the summer was past the sun would not be nearly as hot; now it had baked the earth as hard as a brick. Yes, when summer was past he was to be married to Lizzie Thumb; but she was not at all pleased with the prospect, as she did not like the tedious mole.

Every morning when the sun rose, and every evening when it set, she stole into the opening of the hole, and when the wind separated the corn so that she could see the blue sky, she thought how bright and lovely everything was out there, and she wished with all her heart again to see the dear swallow; but it never came. It had no doubt flown far, far away into the lovely green wood.

When autumn came, Lizzie Thumb had her wedding outfit quite ready.

"In four weeks' time you will be married," said the field-mouse to her. But Lizzie Thumb cried, and said that she would not have the tedious mole.

"Fiddlesticks!" said the old mouse. "Now, don't be obstinate, or I'll bite you with my white teeth. You will get a fine husband; not even the Queen herself has such a fur coat. His larder and cellar are full. You thank Providence you get a husband like *him*."

And so the wedding was to take place. The mole had already come to fetch her; she was to live with him far down in the earth, and never again come into the warm sunshine, as he could not stand it. The poor little child was so sad at heart, for now she had to say good-by to the lovely sun, which she at all events had been allowed to see from the hole of the field-mouse.

"Good-by, you bright sun!" she said, raising her hand towards it; and she went even a little way outside the field-mouse's dwelling, as by this time the corn was cut, only the dry stubble remaining. "Good-by, good-by," she again said, and threw her tiny arms around a little



red flower near her. "Remember me to the dear swallow, if you happen to see it."

"Quiwit, quiwit!" it sounded at that moment overhead, and when she looked up, lo! there came the swallow flying. When the swallow saw Lizzie Thumb it became very happy, and Lizzie Thumb told it how unwilling she was to marry the nasty mole, and that she was to live far underground, where the sun never shone. She could not help crying at the very thought.

"The cold winter is coming," said the swallow, "and I am flying far away to warm lands; will you come with me? You can sit on my back, only tie yourself fast with your girdle, and we will fly away from the nasty mole and his dark dwelling, far away over the mountain to the warm lands where the sun shines brighter than here, and where there is always summer and lovely flowers. Come with me, you dear little Lizzie Thumb, who saved my life when I lay frozen down in the dark earth."

"Yes, I will come with you," said Lizzie Thumb, and seated herself on the back of the bird, with her feet on its outstretched wings, tied her girdle to one of the strongest feathers, and the swallow flew high into the air, over woods and lakes, far above lofty mountains where the snow is eternal, and little Lizzie Thumb felt cold in the crisp air; but then she crept under the bird's warm feathers, keeping only her head out to look at the beautiful scene below.

At length they reached the warm lands where the sun shines much brighter than here, where the sky is twice as deep, and where the loveliest green and blue grapes grow by the roadside and on the hedges. In the woods glistened oranges and lemons; the air was sweet with the aroma of myrtle and mint, and on the roads ran the prettiest children playing with big, many-hued butterflies. But the swallow flew on still farther, and the country became more and more lovely. Under the magnificent green trees, by an azure lake, stood a shining white palace of marble, of great age, the lofty columns of which were garlanded by the vine; and here, high up by the roof, lived the swallow that had carried Lizzie Thumb, together with many others.

"This is my dwelling," said the swallow; "but you had better select one of the lovely flowers growing down there and I will place you in it, and you will be as happy as you could ever wish."

"Oh, how delightful!" cried little Lizzie, clapping her tiny hands.

On the ground lay a large white marble column which had broken



into three pieces, among which grew the most beautiful big white flowers. The swallow flew down with Lizzie Thumb and placed her on one of the broad petals, and, lo! how surprised she was! There sat a little man in the middle of the flower, white and transparent as if he were of glass, with the loveliest gold crown on his head and the prettiest delicate wings on his shoulders, and he was not taller than Lizzie Thumb herself. It was the angel of the flower. And in every other also dwelt such a little man and woman; but he was King of them all.

“Oh, how handsome he is!” whispered Lizzie Thumb to the swallow.



The little sovereign was greatly frightened by the swallow, for compared to him it was quite a monster bird in size; but when he beheld Lizzie Thumb he became overjoyed, as she was the loveliest little maiden he had ever seen. And he took off his golden crown and placed it on her head, asked her name, and whether she would become his wife, and Queen of all the flowers. This was, indeed, a husband of a different position from the son of the toad, and the mole with the black fur coat.

So she said “yes” to the handsome Prince; and from every flower came a little lady and cavalier to do homage to her, all so lovely it was a pleasure to look at them. And every one made a present to Lizzie Thumb; but the prettiest was a pair of lovely wings of a great



white fly, which Lizzie Thumb fastened to her shoulders; and now she too was able to fly from flower to flower. And there was great joy, and the swallow sat up in its nest and sang to them as well as it was able; but it was sad at heart at having to part from Lizzie Thumb, whom it loved so dearly.

"You shall not be called Lizzie Thumb any more," said the angel; "it is an ugly name, and you are so pretty. We will call you May."

"Good-by, good-by!" cried the swallow; and it flew away from the warm lands back to Denmark. There it had a little nest above the window where the man lives who tells the fairy tales; to him it twittered, "Quiwit, quiwit!" and it is from that we have the whole story.







POOR Johnny was very, very sad, for his father was quite ill, being on the point of dying. There was nobody besides the two in the little room; the lamp on the table was burning low, as it was very late.

"You have been a good son, John," said the dying father, "and God is sure to help you through the world." And he looked at him with mild, grave eyes, drew a deep breath, and died. It was like sleep. But John wept; now he was quite alone in the world, had neither father nor mother, sister nor brother. Poor John! He knelt before the bed, and kissing the hand of his dead father, wept many a bitter tear. At last, however, his eyes closed, and he fell asleep with his head resting on the hard edge of the bed.

Then he had a most remarkable dream. He saw the sun and moon bow down before him, and he saw his father hale and well, and heard him laugh as he used to when in his best mood. A lovely girl with a golden crown on her long, beautiful hair held out her hand to John, and his father said: "See what a bride you have! She is the most beautiful in the whole world."

Then he awoke, and all the splendor was gone; his father lay dead and cold in the bed, and they were quite alone. Poor John!





Next week the deceased was buried; John followed close behind the coffin, but he would see his kind father, who had loved him so much, no more. He heard the earth thrown on the coffin; there was only a corner of it left visible, and the next shovelful covered this also, and John felt as if his heart would break with grief. The mourners sang a hymn; it sounded so beautifully that tears came into John's eyes; he wept, and it eased his heart. The sun shone so brightly on the green trees, as if it would say, "Don't be so sad, John; see how beautifully blue the sky is, and your father is now up there, praying the good God that your life may be a happy one."

"I will always be good," said John, "and I shall join my father in heaven. Oh, what joy to meet him again! How much I shall have to tell him, and how much *he* will have to show *me* and teach *me* of the heavenly splendor, as he taught me here on earth! Oh, what joy!"

John's thoughts assumed such reality that he actually laughed in spite of the tears in his eyes. The little birds sat in the chestnut-trees, twittering, "Quiwit! quiwit!" They were so happy, although they too had been to the funeral; but they knew well enough that the dead man was now in heaven, and had wings more lovely and far greater than theirs, and that he was happy because he had been good on earth, and therefore they were so glad. John saw them flying from the green trees far away out in the world, and he longed to follow them; but first he made a large wooden cross for his father's grave, and when he carried it thither in the evening he found the grave neatly trimmed with sand and flowers: that was the act of strangers who loved his kind old father who was now gone.

Early the next morning John made a bundle of his things, put his inheritance, consisting of five pounds and a few shillings, into his girdle, and thus he was ready to wander into the world. But first he went to the cemetery, to his father's grave, where he prayed, and said, "Good-by, my dear father. I will always be good, and therefore you may pray of the good God that all may go well with me."

Out in the fields where John was walking all the flowers stood so fresh and beautiful in the warm sunshine, and they nodded their heads in the wind just as if they meant to say, "Welcome into the green fields! Is it not lovely out here?" But John turned round once more to have a last look at the old church where he had been christened, and where he had prayed and sung every Sunday with his old father.



Just then he saw, high up in one of the dormer windows, the church-brownie<sup>1</sup> with his little red pointed cap on, shading his eyes with his arm, as the sun was shining right in his eyes. John nodded good-by to him, and the little fellow waved his red cap, laid one hand on his heart and kissed the other several times, to show how hearty his wishes were that he might have a lucky journey.

And John thought of all the splendid things he should see in the great magnificent world, and wandered farther and farther away, — much farther than he had ever been. Now he did not even know the towns through which he passed, nor the people he met; he was among strangers.

The first night he had to sleep on a haycock out in the fields, as he had no other bed; but he thought that delightful; the King himself could not have had a better one. The great field with the river, the hay with the blue sky above, was indeed a splendid bedroom. The green grass, with the little red and white flowers, was the carpet, the elder and the brier bushes bouquets of flowers, and for a bath he had the whole river with its clear, fresh water, in which the rushes swayed to and fro, saying both good-night and good-morning. The moon furnished a fine big night-light, high up under the blue ceiling, and it would not set fire to the curtains. John might sleep in peace; and that he did too, awaking first when the sun rose, and all the birds around him began to sing, "Good-morning! good-morning! Are you not up yet?"

The bells rang for church, for it was Sunday. The people were going to the service, and John followed them, sang a hymn, and listened to the Word of God, and it seemed to him exactly as if he were in his church at home, where he was christened and sang hymns with his father.

Out in the churchyard there were many graves, and the grass grew high on some of them. Then John thought of his own father's grave, and that it would soon look like one of these, now that he could not weed and trim it. He therefore sat down, pulled up the grass, righted the wooden crosses which had fallen, put the wreaths which had blown away back in their places, thinking all the while, "Perhaps some one will do the same to *my* father's grave now that I cannot do it."

At the gate of the church stood an old beggar leaning on his crutch.

<sup>1</sup> The belief used to be prevalent among Scandinavian peasants that the village church, like every farm, had its "brownie" (*Nisse*). — TR.



John gave him the silver coin he had, and then went on happy and cheerful.

Towards night a terrible storm arose, and John hurried to obtain shelter, but it soon became pitch dark. At last he reached a little church standing solitary on an eminence, the door of which was open; so he slipped in, intending to remain there till the storm was over.

"I will sit down in a corner," he said; "I am so tired and want a rest." And he sat down, folded his hands, said his prayers, and before he was himself aware of it was asleep, dreaming peacefully, while it lightened and thundered without.



When he awoke it was midnight, but the storm was past and the moon shone down through the windows. In the middle of the church stood a coffin with a body in it which had not yet been buried. But John was not the least frightened, for he had a good conscience and knew that the dead do no harm; it is only the living wicked people who do that. Two such wicked men stood near the body, which had been placed in the church before being buried, and they wanted to insult it by taking it out of the coffin and throwing it outside the church. Poor, dead man!

"Why do you want to do that?" asked John. "It is wicked to do that; let him rest in the Lord's name."

"Nonsense," said both the wicked men. "He has cheated us; he owes us money he could not pay, and now he is dead into the bargain,



so we shall not get a penny, and therefore we want to be revenged; he shall lie like a dog outside the church."

"I have only five pounds," said John; "it is my whole inheritance, but I will gladly give it to you if you promise me honestly to leave the dead man in peace. I shall get on without the money somehow; I am well and strong, and God will help me."

"Well," said the two wicked men, "if you pay his debt thus, we will leave him in peace, you may rely on it." And they took the money John offered them, laughed at his kind-heartedness, and went away. But John put the body back into the coffin, folded the hands, said good-by to the dead man, and went happy and cheerful forth through the big forest.

All around him where the moonbeams fell between the trees he saw the prettiest little elves dance merrily. They were not afraid of John; they knew that he was good and innocent, and it is only the wicked who cannot see the elves. Some of them were not longer than a finger, and had long golden hair fastened up with combs of gold. Two and two they sat rocking on the big dew-drops which lay on the leaves and the high grass. Sometimes a drop would roll down between the high grass, and with it the elves on it, and then there was great laughter and merriment among the rest of the little company. It was quite a delight to watch them. They sang, and John recognized quite distinctly all the pretty songs he had learned as a little boy.

Great colored spiders with silver crowns on their heads spun long suspension bridges and palaces from one hedge to another, which looked, when the fine dew settled on them, like shining glass in the bright moonlight. Such the play went on till sunrise. Then the little elves crept into the flower buds, and the wind caught their bridges and palaces and carried them into the air, where they looked like great cobwebs.

John had just got out of the forest, when a man's strong voice called out behind him, "Halloo, comrade! where are you going to?"

"Out into the wide world," said John. "I have neither father nor mother, and am a poor boy, but I am sure the Lord will help me."

"I am also going out into the wide world," said the stranger. "Shall we go together?"

"With all my heart," said John; and so they went together.

They soon began to like each other very much, for they were both good. But John soon discovered that the stranger knew more than



he, as he had been over nearly the whole world and could tell about everything.

The sun was already high in the sky when they sat down to breakfast under a big tree. Just then an old woman came along. She was very, very old, and quite bent, leaning on a crutch, and on her back she carried a bundle of fagots which she had gathered in the wood. She had tucked up her apron, and John saw three big brooms made of willow sprigs and fern in it. Just as she was quite close to them her foot slipped and she fell, uttering a loud cry, for she had broken her leg, poor old woman!

John at once proposed to carry her home; but the stranger opened his satchel, took out a box with some ointment in it, saying that it would make her perfectly well again, and that she might even walk home as if nothing had happened. But for this he required that she should give him the three brooms she had in her apron.

"That's well paid," said the old woman, and nodded her head very strangely. She did not want to part with her brooms, but it was not pleasant to lie there with a broken leg, so she gave them to him. And he had no sooner rubbed the leg with the ointment than the old woman rose, and walked better than before, — such properties had the ointment; but that was not to be had at the chemist's.

"What are you going to do with those brooms?" John asked of his companion.

"They are three pretty nosegays, I think; they are to my taste; I am a funny fellow." And so they covered a good bit of road.

"Look, what is rising yonder?" said John, pointing before him. "What heavy clouds!"

"No," said his companion, "they are not clouds, but mountains, — high, lovely mountains, on the top of which you are above the clouds. That is something delicious, I can tell you; to-morrow we shall have reached them."

But they were not so near as they appeared, and it took them a whole day to reach them, and there were forests growing right up to the sky, and stones lying about as big as whole towns. It would no doubt require great exertion to climb them; and therefore John and his companion went into an inn to have a good rest first, and gather strength for the morrow.

Down below in the parlor of the inn there were a good many people, as there was a man there who had a doll's theatre. He had just begun,



and the people were sitting around to see the play, and right in front sat a stout old butcher, occupying the best seat, who had a big dog, — oh! such a brute; how ferocious it looked! It was sitting next to him, staring like everybody else.

And now the play began. It was a beautiful little play with a king and a queen in it who sat on a velvet throne with golden crowns on their heads, and wore long trains, for they could afford it. The most lovely wooden dolls with eyes of glass and big moustachios stood at the doors, opening and shutting them, so that the room should be well aired. It was such a pretty play, and not at all serious; but no sooner did the queen rise to walk across the floor, than the dog, — Heaven only knows what he could be thinking of, — as the butcher was not holding him, jumped right on to the stage, and bit the queen across her slender waist, which went, “Krick, krack.” How very dreadful it was!

The poor man who had the theatre was quite frightened, and very sorry for his queen, as she was the prettiest doll he had, and now the nasty dog had bitten her head off; but when the people had gone, the stranger who was in John's company said he would repair her; and he brought out the jar and rubbed the queen with the same ointment with which he had helped the poor old woman when she had broken her leg. And no sooner had the doll been rubbed than she was not only mended, but she could move her limbs; there was no necessity for pulling any strings. She was like a human being, with the exception of being unable to talk. The man who owned the little theatre was in high glee, as the doll now wanted no attention, but could dance by herself. None of the others could do that.

But when night came, and everybody had gone to bed, there was somebody sighing so awfully heavy and so long that they all got up to see who it was. The man who had effected the performance went to his little theatre, as it was inside it somebody sighed. The dolls were lying in a heap, the king among his pages, which were all sighing, and staring with their big glass eyes, as they all wanted to be rubbed like the queen and be able to move about at will. The queen fell on her knees, raised her pretty golden crown, and prayed that it might be taken, if they only would rub her husband as well as the courtiers. And the poor man who owned the theatre could not help weeping, as he was so very sorry for them; so he promised the travelling companion to give him all the money he might take the next night if he



would but rub four or five of his prettiest dolls. But the travelling companion said he desired nothing else than the big sword he carried; and having received it, he rubbed six dolls, which at once began to dance so prettily that all the servant-girls — the living ones — began to dance too. The coachman danced with the cook, and the boots with the chambermaid; and all the strangers present, yes, even the coal-shovel and the tongs, tried to join; but they fell at their first steps. That was a merry night indeed!

The next morning John and his companion left them all, and went up the lofty mountains and through the great fir forests. At last they were so high up that the church-spires down below looked like little red berries among the green, and they could see many, many miles farther, where they had never been. Such a lovely view of the earth John had never beheld; and the sun shone so warmly through the fresh blue air, while among the mountains he could hear the huntsmen wind their horns so beautifully that tears rose into his eyes through joy, and he could not help exclaiming, "Oh, beloved God, let me thank thee from my heart, because thou hast given us such loveliness as that on earth!"

His companion too stood with folded hands, looking down upon the forest and the villages in the bright sunlight. At that moment there was a delightfully sweet sound above their heads, and they looked up, and, lo! a large white swan was floating in the air, which was so lovely, and sang more beautifully than they had ever heard before; but the song became weaker and weaker, the lovely bird bent its head, and finally sank down dead at their feet.

"Two such beautiful wings, so large and white as these," said the travelling companion, "are worth money; I will take them with me. You see how lucky it is I got the sword;" and with one stroke he cut off the wings of the dead swan, and took them with him.

They travelled many, many miles farther over the mountains, till at last they saw a large town before them with more than a hundred towers, which glistened like silver in the sun; and in the middle of it was a palace of marble with a roof of burnished gold, and in this the King resided.

John and his companion decided not to enter the town at once, but to put up at an inn outside it, in order to smarten themselves a little, as they liked to look well in the streets. The host told them that the King was a very kind man, who never did anybody any harm; but his



daughter—may Heaven protect us!—was a very wicked Princess. Beauty she had enough: there was nobody lovelier; but what good did it do, when she was a wicked witch who had caused the death of so many handsome Princes? She permitted any one who wished to propose to her, were he prince or beggar; but he had to guess three things she asked him: if he did that, she would marry him and he would become King of the whole country when her father died. But if he could not guess them, she had him hanged or beheaded,—so wicked was the lovely Princess. This caused her father, the old King, much sorrow; but he could not prevent her being so wicked, as he had once promised he would not interfere with her wooers, and that she might do as she pleased. Every Prince who came, failed in the task, and was hanged or beheaded; he had been warned beforehand, and need not propose. The old King was so very sad at all the grief and misery caused thereby, that for a whole day, every year, he and all his soldiers lay on their knees praying that the Princess might become good; but she would not. Even the old women who drank gin colored it quite black before drinking it, so much did they mourn; and more they could not be expected to do.

“The wicked Princess!” said John; “she ought to be whipped; it would do her good. If I were the old King she should smart for it.”

At the same moment they heard the people outside shout, “Hurrah!” The Princess was passing on horseback, and was so beautiful that everybody forgot how wicked she was, and therefore they shouted, “Hurrah!”

Twelve lovely maidens, all in white silk and with a tulip of gold in the hand, rode by her side on black shining horses, while she herself was seated on a snow-white one, ornamented with diamonds and rubies; and her riding-habit was of pure gold, the whip she held in her hand looking like a sunbeam. The golden crown on her head looked as if made of little stars from the heavens above, and the mantle was woven of thousands of butterflies' wings; but in spite of that she was more lovely than all her clothes.

When John saw her he turned as red as a drop of blood, and he could hardly speak a word: the Princess was exactly like the handsome girl with the golden crown on her head he had seen in the dream the night his father died. He thought her so beautiful he could not help loving her very much. “It was no doubt not true,” he said, “that she

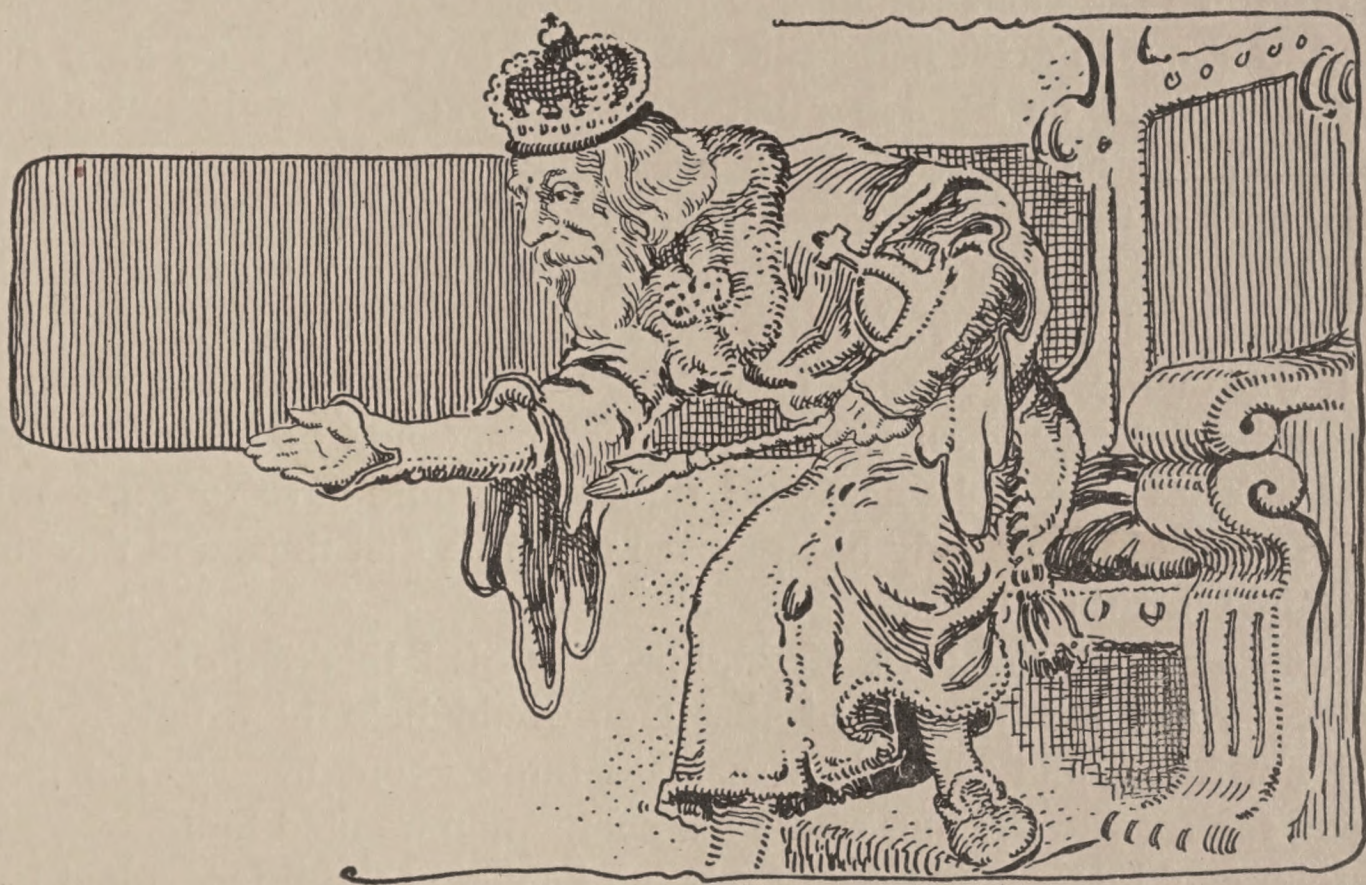


was such a wicked witch as to let those who could not guess what she asked be hanged or beheaded."

"Every one is allowed to propose to her," he said to himself, "even the poorest beggar; I cannot help going up to the palace."

Every one warned him not to do it, as he would doubtless share the fate of the others; even his companion advised him not to go; but John said it would be all right, and having polished his boots, brushed his coat, washed his face and hands, and combed his pretty golden hair, he went quite alone into the town and up to the palace.

"Come in," said the old King, when John knocked at the door. John opened it, and the old King, in his dressing-gown and embroid-



ered slippers, came to meet him. He had the golden crown on his head, the sceptre in one hand, and the golden globe in the other.

"One moment," he said, and stuck the globe under his arm, in order to shake hands with John. But as soon as he heard that he was a wooer, he began to cry so much that the globe and the sceptre fell on the floor, and he had to dry his eyes with the dressing-gown, — the poor old King!

"Don't do it," he said. "You will share the fate of the others. Come and look."

And he took John into the Princess's garden, and what a horrible sight met him!



In every tree hung the skeletons of three or four princes who had proposed to the Princess but failed to guess her questions, and at every gust of wind they rattled, and frightened the little birds so that they never came into the garden. All the flowers were tied up to human bones, and in the flower-pots were grinning skulls. It was indeed a garden for a Princess!

"Look for yourself," said the old King. "You will share the fate of the others you see here; do not persist, therefore. You make me quite unhappy, for I take it so to heart."

John kissed the hand of the good old King, and said that all would go well, he loved the beautiful Princess so dearly.

Just then she came riding into the courtyard with all her ladies, and they went out to greet her. She was indeed lovely; and she gave John her hand, and he liked her better than ever; she could not be the wicked witch, he thought, which everybody said she was. They then went up into the drawing-room, where little pages handed round sweets and gingerbread-nuts; but the old King was so grieved he could eat nothing; besides, the gingerbread was too hard for his teeth.

It was then arranged that John should come back the next morning, when the judges and all the privy counsellors would be present to hear how he guessed. If he answered rightly he would have to come twice more; but as yet nobody had guessed right the first time, and therefore they had lost their lives.

John was not the least afraid, but only glad thinking of the lovely Princess, and firmly believed that God would help him, but how, he did not know, and he did not care to think about it. He ran gayly along the road to the inn, where his companion awaited him.

John could never get tired of relating how kind the Princess had been and how lovely she was; he longed already for the next day, when he was to try his luck at guessing. But his companion shook his head and was very unhappy.

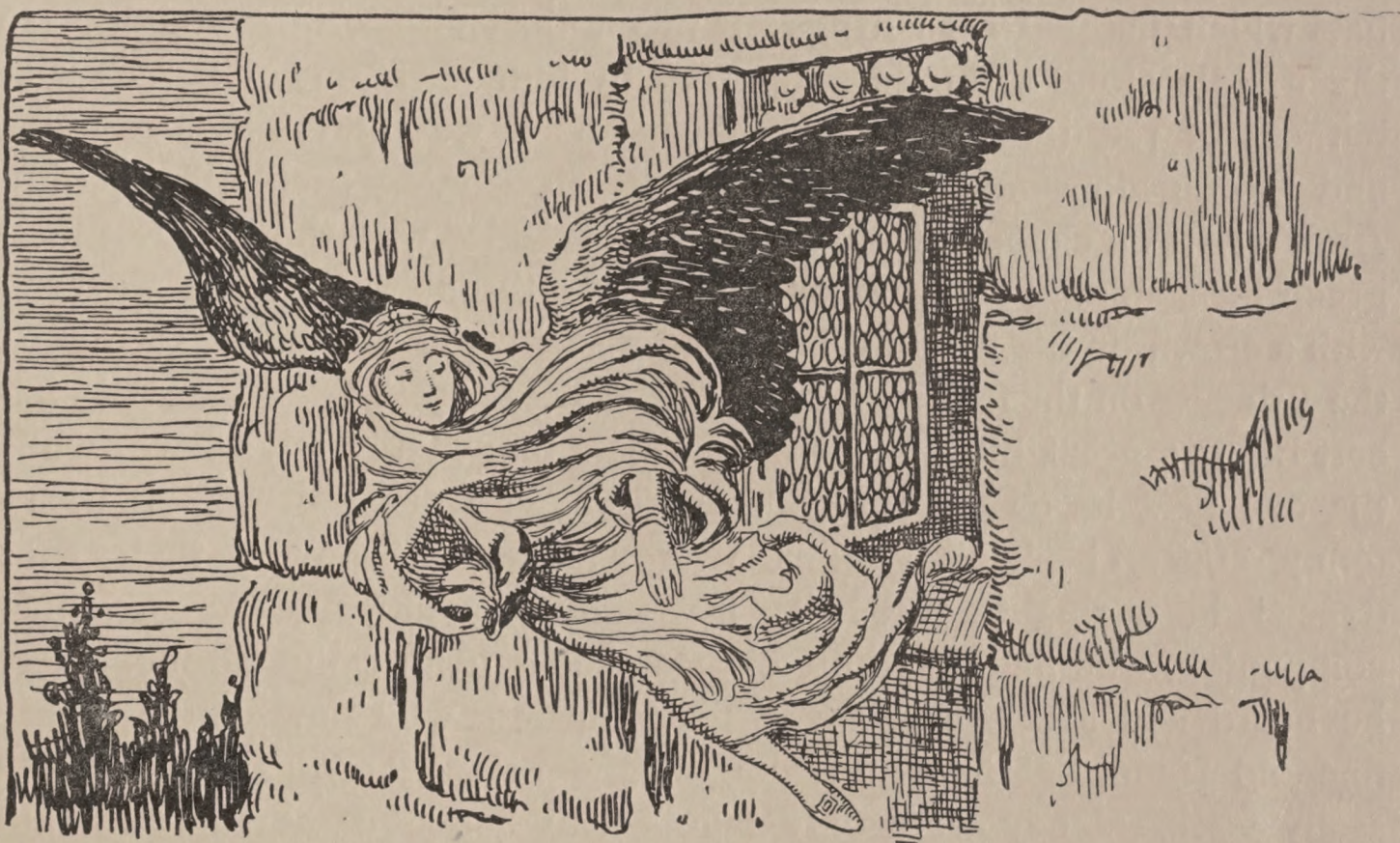
"I like you so much," he said. "We could have been companions a good while longer, but now I shall lose you. My poor, dear John! I could cry; but I do not wish to make you unhappy the last evening we shall probably spend together. We will be merry, really merry, and to-morrow, when you are gone, I will cry."

It had soon become known all over the city that a new suitor to the Princess had arrived, and grief prevailed in consequence everywhere. The theatre was closed and all the old women tied crape round their



cakes, while the King and the priests lay on their knees in the church. Sorrow reigned everywhere, as it was expected John would share the fate of the others.

In the evening the travelling companion prepared a bowl of punch, and said to John they would be merry, and drink the health of the Princess. But when John had drunk two glasses, he became so sleepy he was unable to keep his eyes open any longer, and he fell asleep. His companion raised him quietly from his seat, and placed him on the bed, and when it was quite dark, fetched the two big wings he had cut off the swan and fastened them to his shoulders. He then thrust



the biggest broom which the old woman who broke her leg had given him into his pocket, opened the window, and flew over the town to the palace, where he concealed himself below the window of the Princess's bedroom.

It was very quiet in the town, when the clock struck a quarter to twelve, and the window opened, and the Princess, in a great white cloak with black wings, flew out toward a big mountain. But the travelling companion made himself invisible, so that she could not see him, flew behind her, and whipped her with the broom till the blood came. Oh, what a speed! And the wind caught her cloak, which spread itself out like a large sail, and the moon shone through it.



"Oh, how it hails! how it hails!" cried the Princess at each stroke from the broom; but she fully deserved every one.

At last she reached the mountain and knocked. There was a noise like thunder when it opened, and the Princess went in; but the travelling companion followed, as nobody could see him. They walked through a broad passage, the walls of which glittered strangely, thousands of spiders running up and down them, shining like fire. They reached a big hall of gold and silver, where flowers big as sunflowers, red and blue, shone on the walls; but nobody could gather them, as the stems were real poisonous snakes, and the flowers ejected fire from their throats. The whole ceiling was studded with glow-worms and blue bats which flapped their wings: it was a most extraordinary sight. In the middle stood a throne supported by four skeletons of horses with harness of red fire-spiders; the throne itself was of milk-white glass, and the cushions made of little black mice biting each other's tails. Above it was a canopy of purple cobweb, studded with the prettiest little green flies, shining like diamonds. On the throne sat an old sorcerer, with a crown on his frightful head and a sceptre in his hand. He kissed the Princess on the forehead, let her take a seat by his side, and the concert began: great big black grasshoppers played the jew's-harp, while the owl beat its own stomach, there being no other drum. It was a funny concert! Tiny goblins with will-o'-the-wisps on their caps danced in a ring in the hall; but nobody could see the travelling companion, who had taken up his stand just behind the throne, where he heard and saw everything. The courtiers, who now entered, were fine and grand, but any one looking at them closely soon saw what they really were. They were only fagots with cabbages at the top, into which the sorcerer had inspired life by witchcraft and given fine clothes. But it did not matter much, as they were only for show.

When dancing had gone on awhile, the Princess told the sorcerer that she had a new suitor, and asked what question she should put to him when he came to the palace the next morning.

"Listen to me," said the sorcerer; "I'll tell you. Ask something very easy, and he won't guess it. Think of your shoe. He won't guess that. Then cut his head off, and do not forget when you come to-morrow to bring me his eyes; I like to eat them."

The Princess courtesied low, saying she should not forget them. The sorcerer then opened the mountain, and she flew home again; but the travelling companion followed her, and whipped her so dreadfully



with the broom that she sighed heavily at the violent hail, and hurried as fast as she could to reach her bedroom, while the travelling companion flew back to the inn, where John was still asleep, took off his wings, and went to bed too, as he had reason to be tired.

John rose quite early the next morning, when his companion also got up, and told him that he had had such a funny dream in the night about the Princess and her shoe, begging him to ask if she had thought of that. It was exactly what he had heard from the sorcerer in the mountain, but he would not tell John that, begging him only to ask if she had not thought of the shoe.

"I may as well ask that as anything else," said John. "Maybe what you have dreamt is right, and I am sure that God will help me. But I will nevertheless say good-by to you, because I may guess wrong, and in that case I shall never see you again."

They then embraced each other, and John went into the town and up to the palace. The whole hall was full of people, the judges sitting in arm-chairs with eider-down cushions behind their heads, for they had such a lot to think about. The old King rose and wiped his eyes with a white pocket-handkerchief. Just then the Princess entered, being more beautiful than on the previous day, and bowing so kindly to everybody. But to John she gave her hand, saying, "Good-morning."

And now John was to guess what she had thought of; and oh, how kindly she looked at him! But no sooner had he uttered the single word "shoe," than she turned deadly pale, trembling all over; but it was of no use, as he had guessed right.

Oh dear, how delighted the old King was! He turned such a summersault that the dust flew about him, and all the people clapped their hands thereat and to John, who had guessed right the first time.

His companion was beside himself with joy when he heard how well everything had gone; but John folded his hands and thanked God, who would doubtless also help him on the next two occasions. On the following day he had to guess again.

The evening was spent like the former. When John was asleep, his companion followed the Princess to the mountain, whipping her harder than the night before, for he had now taken two brooms. Nobody could see him, but he heard everything. The Princess thought of her glove, and he told John so, as if it were a dream. So John guessed right once more, and there was great joy at the palace.



All the courtiers turned summersaults as they had seen the King do before; but the Princess lay on a couch and would not say a word. Everything now depended on whether John could guess right the third time. If he did that, he would have the Princess and inherit the whole kingdom when the old King died; if not, he would forfeit his life, and the sorcerer would eat his pretty blue eyes.

At night John went early to bed, said his prayers, and slept quite peacefully; but his companion fastened the wings to his shoulders, tied the sword to his side, took all three brooms, and flew to the palace.

It was pitch dark, and the wind was so high that the tiles flew off the roofs, while the trees in the garden, with the skeletons, swayed to and fro like reeds in a gale. It lightened every moment, and the thunder rolled so incessantly that it was like one continuous clap. Just then the window opened and the Princess flew out. She was pale as death, but laughed nevertheless at the weather, thinking it was not bad enough. Her great white cloak fluttered in the wind like a big sail; but the travelling companion whipped her with the three brooms till the blood trickled on to the ground, and she was hardly able to proceed. At last, however, she reached the mountain.

"It hails and blows awfully," she said; "I have never been out in such weather."

"One may have too much, even of a good thing," said the sorcerer.

The Princess then told him that John had guessed right the second time also; if he did so on the morrow he had won the game, and she should never be able to come to the mountain again, or practise sorcery as before; she was therefore quite sad.

"He shall not guess it," said the sorcerer; "I will think of something he will never guess, or else he is a greater sorcerer than myself. But now let us be merry!"

And he took the Princess's two hands and they danced with all the little goblins and the will-o'-the-wisps. The red spiders ran gayly up and down the walls, and the fire-flowers looked like shooting sparks; the owl beat the drum, the crickets chirped, and the black grasshoppers played the jew's-harp. It was indeed a merry ball!

When the dancing had gone on for a while the Princess was obliged to return, as they might miss her at the palace. The sorcerer said he would accompany her, so that they might be together a little while longer.











They flew out in the terrible storm, and the travelling companion wore his three brooms out on their backs. The sorcerer had never been out in such a hail. Outside the palace he said good-by to the Princess, at the same time whispering in her ear, "Think of my head." But the travelling companion heard it all the same, and at the same moment the Princess rushed in through the window of her bedroom, and the sorcerer was on the point of returning; he seized him by his long black beard and with his sword severed his ugly head from the body before he knew anything about it. The body he threw into the sea to the fishes; but the head he only dipped in the water, tied it into his silk handkerchief, and took it with him to the inn, where he went to sleep.

The next morning he gave John the handkerchief, but requested him not to untie it until the moment the Princess asked him what she had been thinking of.

There were so many people in the great hall at the palace that they were packed as closely as herring in a barrel. The judges and the privy counsellors sat in their chairs with the soft cushions under their heads, and the old King had a new suit of clothes on; the golden sceptre and the crown were furbished up, and everything looked very grand. But the Princess was very pale, and wore a jet-black dress, as if she were in mourning.

"Of what have I been thinking?" she said to John; and he at once untied the handkerchief, but became very much horrified on seeing the ugly head of the sorcerer. Everybody shuddered, for it was awful to look at; but the Princess sat like a statue and could not open her lips.

At last she rose and gave her hand to John, for of course he had guessed right. She looked, however, neither right nor left, but only said with a deep sigh, "Now you are my master, and to-night our marriage shall take place."

"That's what I like," said the old King. "That's as it ought to be."

All the people shouted "Hurrah!" the band played in the streets, the bells pealed, and the old women selling cakes took the crape off their gingerbread; for joy reigned among all. Three whole oxen stuffed with ducks and fowls were roasted in the market-place, any one being allowed to carve off them. The fountain ran with the choicest wines, and any one who bought a twopenny cake at the



baker's received six buns into the bargain,—and those buns with raisins in them.

At night the whole town was illuminated, and the soldiers fired off cannon and the boys squibs ; and eating, drinking, playing, and dancing went on at the palace, where all the handsomest men and the loveliest ladies danced together.

But the Princess was still a witch, and did not care about John. This his companion discovered, and gave him, therefore, three feathers of the swan's wings and a little flask with some drops in it, telling John to place a bath full of water by the side of the Princess's bed, and when she was about to get into the bed to give her a push, so that she



would fall into the water, in which he should dip her three times, having previously dropped the feathers and the drops into it. She would then become freed from the spell of witchery, and would love him very much.

John did everything his companion told him to do ; the Princess shrieked when he dipped her under the water, and struggled in his hands in the shape of a big black swan with flaming eyes. When she rose the second time, the swan was white, with a black ring round the neck. John prayed sincerely to God, and let the water for the third time cover her, and at the same moment she became a lovely Princess.



She was a great deal more beautiful than before, and thanked John with tears in her eyes for having broken the witchery.

The next morning the old King called, with his whole court, and the congratulations lasted all the morning; at last came the travelling companion, who had his stick in his hand and his satchel on his back. John embraced him several times, begging him not to leave; he should stay with him, being the cause of all his happiness. But his companion shook his head, and said quite kindly: "No, my time is up. I have



only paid my debt. Do you remember the body of the man which those wicked men were going to insult? You gave all you possessed that it should rest in peace. I am that man."

In the same instant he disappeared.

The marriage festivities lasted a whole month, and John and the Princess loved each other very dearly. The old King lived to enjoy many a happy day, and his grandchildren rode on his knee and played with his sceptre, while John became King over the whole country.





FAR out in the ocean the water is as blue as the loveliest cornflower, and as clear as the purest glass; but it is very

deep there, deeper than any anchor cable can reach, and many church-spires would have to be placed on top of one another to reach above the surface.

It is here that the People of the Sea live.

But you must not imagine that there is only a flat white sand-bottom there; no, the most wonderful trees and shrubs grow there, which are so pliant that they move by the slightest agitation of the water just as if they were alive.

Fishes great and small slip through the branches, just like the birds up in the air.

In the very deepest spot is the palace of the Sea King. The walls are of coral, the long pointed windows of the purest amber, while the roof is formed of mussels, which open and close their shells according to the flow of the water, which looks very pretty, as in each one lie shining pearls, every one of which would be a splendid ornament in the crown of a Queen.

For many years the Sea King down there had been a widower, but his old mother kept house for him. She was a very clever woman, but proud of her birth, and therefore she had twelve oysters on her tail, — the most noble being allowed to carry only six. Otherwise she deserved



much praise, particularly for loving the little Sea Princesses her granddaughters so much. They were six in number; but the loveliest of them all was the youngest. Her complexion was as soft and delicate as a rose-leaf, and her eyes as blue as the deepest lake; but like her sisters she had no legs, her body finishing in a fish-tail.

All the day long they played in the great halls of the palace, where living flowers grew from the walls. They opened the great amber windows, and fishes swam into them, just like the swallows flying in when we open ours; but the fishes swam up to the Princesses, ate from their hands, and allowed themselves to be stroked.

Outside the palace was a large garden with purple and indigo-blue trees. The fruit shone like gold and the flowers like fire, while they always moved their stems and leaves. The ground was the finest sand, blue as the flames of burning sulphur. Over everything there lay a peculiar bluish glimmer; you might almost fancy that you were high up in the air, with the sky above and below, rather than at the bottom of the sea.

In calm weather the sun would look like a large crimson flower from the calyx of which the light streamed.

Each one of the little Princesses had her piece of ground in the garden, where she dug and planted what she liked best. One gave it the shape of a whale, another preferred that of a little mermaid, while the youngest made hers round as the sun, and had only flowers, like it, crimson in color. She was a peculiar child, quiet and thoughtful; and when the other sisters decorated their little gardens with all the strange objects they obtained from foundered vessels, she would only, besides the crimson flowers, have the statue of a pretty boy of pure white marble, which had come down with a wreck. By the side of it she planted a crimson weeping-willow, which grew splendidly, overhanging it with its fresh green boughs, while the shadows on the blue sand moved with them. It looked as if the crown and the roots were playing, wishing to kiss each other.

She had no greater pleasure than to hear talk of the world above, and her old grandmother had to tell her all she knew of ships and cities, human beings and animals. What seemed particularly strange to her was that on earth the flowers had scent, which they had not at the bottom of the sea, and that the woods were green, and that the fishes among the boughs could sing so beautifully that it was a pleasure to listen to them. They were the little birds, which her grandmother



called fishes; for otherwise she would not have been understood, as they had never seen a bird.

"When you have filled your fifteenth year," said the grandmother, "you shall be allowed to rise to the surface of the sea, sit in the moonlight on the rocks, and see the big ships pass, and even woods and cities."

Next year the eldest was fifteen, and there being one year between each, the youngest would still have to wait five years before being allowed to come up and see how our world looked. But one promised the other to relate what she had seen and found most beautiful the first day, as their grandmother did not tell them everything, and there was much they wished to know.

None of them longed more warmly for this event than the youngest, who was just the one who had to wait the longest and who was so quiet and thoughtful. Many a night she stood at the open window looking up through the deep-blue water, where the fishes splashed with their fins and tails. She could see the moon and the stars, and though they looked pale, they seemed, through the water, bigger than with us. If then something like a dark cloud glided before them, she knew that it was a whale, or a ship with many people on board, which passed above her. They hardly thought that a pretty little Mermaid stood down below raising her white arms towards them.

The eldest Princess was now fifteen, and was allowed to ascend to the surface.

On her return she had a hundred things to relate; but the most delightful of all was, she said, to lie in the moonshine on a sand-bank, in calm water, close to the shore, looking at a big town where the lights twinkled like thousands of stars, to listen to the music, the noise of carriages, and the hum of human voices; to see the many churches with their spires, and hear the peal of bells. And the youngest longed all the more for all this just because she was not allowed to go up.

How attentively she listened! and when later on in the evening she stood at the open window looking up through the deep blue water, she thought of the big town with its noise and hum, and she even fancied she heard the church-bells peal.

The following year the second sister was allowed to ascend and swim whither she liked. She rose just as the sun was setting, and this was the spectacle she thought most lovely. The whole sky looked as of gold, she said; and the clouds! — she was unable to describe their



beauty. Red and violet ones had floated above her, but still faster flew a flock of wild swans across the water towards the sun, looking like a long white veil. She swam towards it herself, but it sank, and the rosy tint on sea and clouds faded away.

The following year the third sister ascended. She was most venturesome of them all, and swam up a big river falling into the sea. She beheld lovely green hills covered with vine, and castles and houses peeping from among splendid woods; she heard the birds sing, and the sun shone so hot that she was often obliged to dive in order to cool her burning face. In a creek she came upon a number of children who were walking about and splashing in the water quite naked. She wanted to play with them, but they ran away frightened, and a little black animal came, — it was a dog, but she had never seen one, — which barked so furiously at her that she became frightened and went into the sea again. She should never forget the splendid woods, the green hills, and the lovely children who could swim in the water although they had no fish-tails.

The fourth sister was not so venturesome, but remained out at sea, and she said that was the loveliest place: she had a view of many, many miles all round, and above her the heavens, looking like a gigantic cupola. She had seen ships, but they were so far that they looked like gulls; the merry dolphins had turned summersaults, and the big whales blown water through their nostrils, as if there were hundreds of fountains at work all round.

At last the turn came to the fifth sister. Her birthday happened to be in winter, and therefore she saw what the others had not seen the first time. The sea was quite green in color, and icebergs were floating all around, each of which looked like a pearl, she said, and still they were bigger than the churches built by men. They had the most weird forms, and glittered like diamonds. She had seated herself on one of the largest, the wind playing with her long hair, and every ship had avoided it in great fear. Towards night the sky became overcast, and it thundered and lightened, while the black waves hove the big icebergs upwards, so that they shone in the fierce lightning. On board every ship the sails were reefed, and great fear prevailed; but she sat quiet on the big, floating berg, and looked at the blue, flaming, forked lightning in zigzag strike the shining waves.

The first time either sister had come up to the surface she was delighted with all the new and beautiful things she saw; but now that



they were grown up, and could rise when they liked, they were indifferent, and they longed for their home; so that after a month's time they considered that the loveliest place, which they liked best.

Many a night the five sisters rose, arm in arm, to the surface, and when the weather became stormy, threatening the wreck of a vessel, swam before it singing so beautifully—for they had the loveliest voices, far lovelier than any human being—about the delights of the bottom of the sea, begging the sailors not to be afraid of descending thither; but the sailors could not understand what they said, and believed it was only the wind; neither did they see the delights down there, as when the ship went down they were drowned, and reached only when dead the palace of the Sea King.

When in the evening the mermaids rose arm in arm, their little sister remained behind alone gazing after them, and she felt as if she could cry; but mermaids have no tears, and suffer, therefore, the more.

"Oh, if I only were fifteen!" she said. "I feel I shall like the world up there so much, and the people who dwell in it."

At last she was fifteen.

"Well, now you too are fledged," said her grandmother, the old Dowager Queen. "Come, let me decorate you like your sisters." And the old lady fastened a wreath of white lilies round her hair, each petal of which was half a pearl, and next she stuck eight big oysters on to her tail, to show her high rank.

"Oh, how it hurts!" exclaimed the little Mermaid.

"Yes, but *noblesse oblige*," said the old Queen.

She would so gladly have thrown off this splendor and laid aside the heavy wreath: her crimson flowers suited her far better; but she dared not.

"Good-by," she cried, and rose through the water as lightly and clear as a bubble.

The sun had just set when she raised her head above the water; but still the clouds shone like gold and purple, and in the crimson sky the evening star twinkled so clearly and beautifully, and the air was fresh and balmy, and the sea calm and silent. A big ship lay there, with three masts; she had all her sails spread, for there was not a breath of wind, and the sailors were sitting in the rigging and on some of the yards. There was music and singing on board, and as the evening closed in hundreds of Chinese lanterns of all colors were lighted; it looked as if all the flags of the world were fluttering in the











air. The little Mermaid swam right up to the window of the great cabin in the stern, and every time a wave lifted her up she could see through the crystal windows; there were many splendidly dressed people in it, but the handsomest of all was a young Prince with large black eyes. He could hardly be more than sixteen; it was his birthday, and in consequence all this gayety. The sailors danced on deck, and when the young Prince came forth hundreds of rockets darted into the air; they were as bright as day, and the little Mermaid became so frightened she dived under the water; but when she a moment after rose again, it seemed to her as if all the stars of heaven were falling. She had never before seen such a magic fire-display. Big suns wheeled around, while magnificent serpents of fire darted through the blue air, and all was reflected in the calm crystal sea. On the ship itself it was so light that every cord was visible, besides the people. Oh, how handsome the young Prince was! and he shook hands with everybody and laughed and talked, while the music sounded in the lovely night.

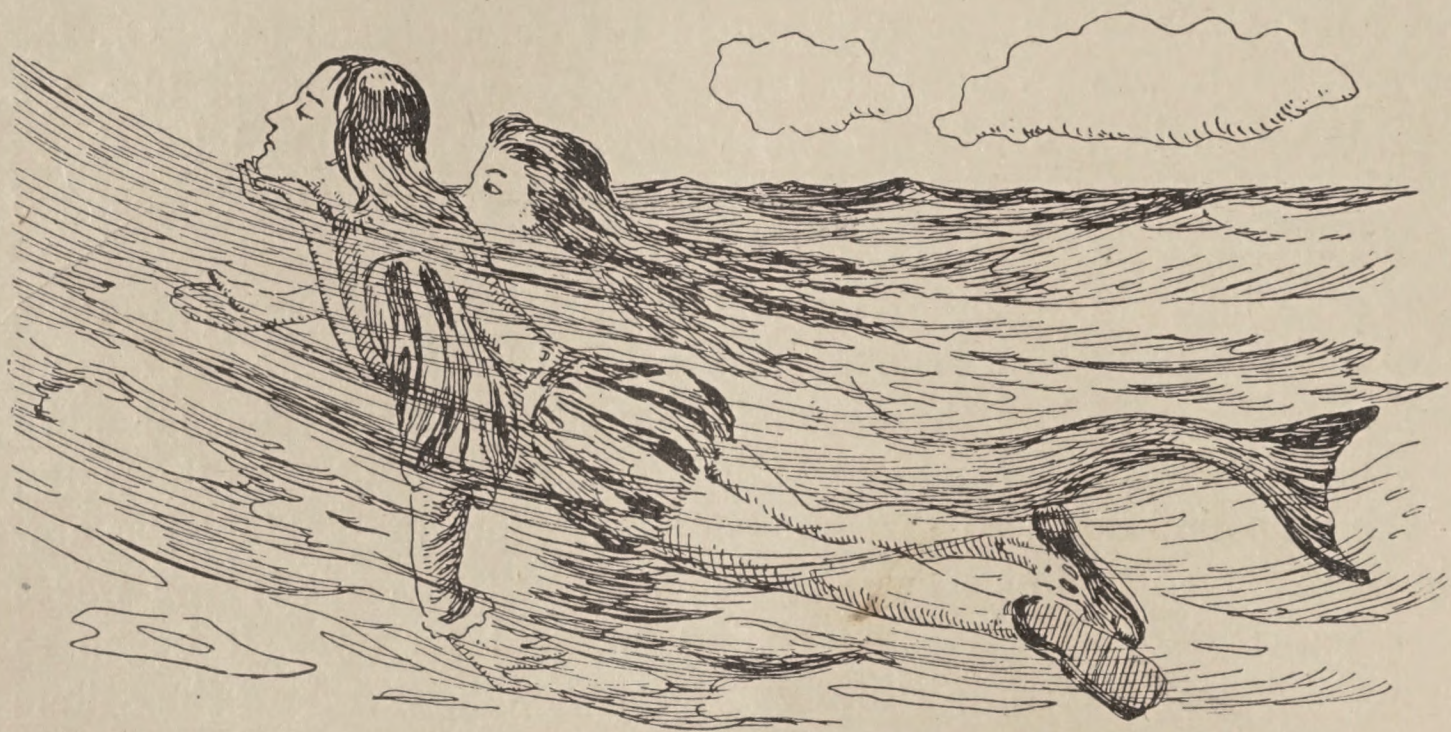
It grew late, but the little Mermaid could not turn her eyes from the ship and the handsome Prince. The colored lanterns were put out, no more rockets rose into the air, and the guns were silent; but far down in the sea there was a rumbling, sullen noise. She lay still in the water, rocking up and down so that she could look into the cabin. But now the ship began to move swifter; sail after sail was filled; the waves rose high; dark clouds came rolling up, and far away it began to lighten. Alas! a terrible storm was approaching, therefore the sailors began to shorten sail. The big ship rolled madly in the wild sea; the waves rose like big, dark mountains, which threatened to sweep over the masts, but the vessel dived like a swan between them, rising again on their towering crests.

The little Mermaid just thought it a delightful race, but not so the sailors. The vessel creaked and strained, the thick planks were bulged out by the heavy shocks of the seas, the mast snapped like a reed, and the ship heeled over so that the water filled the hold. The little Mermaid saw that they were in danger, and she too had to take care of the spars and splints floating about. One moment it was so pitch-dark she could see nothing; but in the next, when there was a flash of lightning, it became so light she could see everything on board.

Every one tried to save himself; but she sought the young Prince in particular, and when the ship broke to pieces she saw him sink into the



deep waters. At first she was very glad, because he would come down to her; but then she recollected that men could not live in the water, and that only his dead body would reach her father's palace. No, die he should not! So she swam in between the spars and planks floating about, entirely forgetting they might crush her, dived very deep and rose again, until she was close to the young Prince, who was hardly able to keep himself above water in the terrible sea; his arms and legs began to grow heavy, his pretty eyes closed, and he would have been drowned had not the little Mermaid come to his aid. She held his head above the water, and let the waves carry them both along.



By the morning the storm had passed, and of the ship there was no trace. The sun rose red and shining from the sea, and it seemed to impart life into the cheeks of the Prince, but his eyes remained closed. The Mermaid kissed his fine high forehead and turned back his wet hair; she thought he was like the marble statue down in her little garden, and she kissed him repeatedly, and wished he might live.

Now she saw land before her: high, blue mountains, on the tops of which white snow glistened as if it was a flock of swans; by the shore there were beautiful green woods, and in front lay a church or convent, she could not say which, but it was some building. Lemon and orange trees grew in the garden, and before the gate stood tall palm-trees. The sea formed a small bay here, calm and quiet, but very deep, right



up to the rocks, where the fine white sand was heaped up. She swam thither with the handsome Prince, and laid him on the sand, with his head high in the warm sunshine.

Just then the bells in the great white building sounded and many young girls came walking through the garden. Then the little Mermaid swam farther out behind some big stones rising above water, threw foam over her hair and breast so that nobody could see her face, and began to watch what became of the poor Prince.

It was not long before a young girl came thither; she appeared to be frightened, but only for a moment. She ran at once for assistance, and the Mermaid saw the Prince reviving and laugh to those around him; but to her he did not laugh, for of course he did not know she had saved him. She felt quite a pang when he was taken into the big house, and dived sadly into the sea and went home to her father's palace.

She had always been quiet and thoughtful, but now she became still more so. Her sisters asked her what she had seen the first time she ascended, but she related nothing.

Many a night and morning she rose to where she had left the Prince. She saw the fruit in the garden ripen and gathered; she saw the snow melt on the lofty mountains, but she saw not the Prince, and therefore she always returned home more sad at heart. Here it was her only consolation to sit in her little garden with her arms round the pretty statue, which was like the Prince, but she cared not for her flowers; they grew wild in the paths and twined their long tendrils and leaves into the boughs of the trees, so that it was nearly dark there.

At last she could bear it no longer, but confided her secret to one of her sisters, and soon all the others knew it; but nobody else besides a few other mermaids, who only told it to a few intimate friends. One of them knew who the Prince was, and had even seen the festivities on board the ship, and knew whence he came, and where his kingdom lay.

"Come, little sister," the other Princesses said; and with their arms entwined they rose to the surface of the sea, just where they knew the palace of the Prince stood.

It was built of a shining light yellow stone, with great marble stairs, one of which reached right down to the sea. Magnificent gilt cupolas rose above the roof, and between the pillars running round the whole building stood marble statues looking as if they were living. Through



the crystal glass in the high windows one could see into the most splendid apartments, hung with the costliest silk curtains and tapestry; while the walls were also ornamented with great paintings which it was quite a pleasure to look at.

In the middle of the largest *salon* splashed a big fountain, the jets of water rising high up against the glass cupola in the roof, through which the sun shone on the water and the lovely plants in the great basin.

Now she knew where he lived, she came on the water many a night, and much nearer the shore than any of the others had ever ventured; yes, she went even right up into the little canal under the magnificent marble balcony, which threw a long shadow over the water. Here she remained watching the young Prince, who thought he was quite alone in the bright moonlight.

She saw him on many other nights sailing away under music in his splendid yacht with fluttering pennants. She peeped out from the green reeds, and the wind caught her long silver-white veil, and when any one saw it he thought it was a swan lifting.

Often of night she heard the fishermen, who were out at sea listening, relate how kind the young Prince was; and it pleased her that she had saved his life when he floated half-dead on the waves, and she thought how heavily his head had rested on her bosom and how warmly she had kissed him. But he knew nothing of this, and could not even dream of her.

She began to love human beings more and more, and like to rise up among them. She thought their world much larger than hers, because they could fly in their ships across the sea and ascend mountains above the clouds, while the lands belonging to them, with forests and fields, reached farther than she could see. There was much she wished to know; but her sisters could not answer all her questions, and therefore she asked her old grandmother, for she knew the world above very well, as she justly called the lands above the sea.

"If human beings are not drowned," asked the little Mermaid, "do they live forever, and do they not die like us in the sea?"

"Yes," said the old lady, "they too must die, and their lives are even shorter than ours. We may live three hundred years; but when we cease living down here we become but foam on the sea, and have not even a grave down here among those we love. We have no immortal soul, and never come to life again. We are like the green reed; when once cut, it never grows again. Men, on the other hand, have souls, which



live even when the bodies are dust. Souls rise through the pure air up to shining stars; and just as we rise up through the water and see the lands of man, so men rise to unknown lovely regions which we shall never behold."

"Why have we not immortal souls too?" asked the little Mermaid, sadly. "I would give all my hundred years to be a human being for one day, and thus share in the heavenly world."

"You should not think of such things," said the old lady. "We are much better and happier than the people up there."

"I must die, then, and float like foam on the sea, and shall not be able to hear the music of the waves, see the lovely flowers and the red sun. Cannot I do something to gain an immortal soul?"

"No," said the old lady; "only if a man came to love you so that you were dearer to him than his father and mother, and, centring his whole thought and love in you, let the priest lay his right hand in yours, with a pledge of constancy here and after, his soul would merge into your body, and even you would have a share of human happiness. Then he would give you his soul, and still retain his own. But that can never be. Just what we think lovely, — namely, your tail, — they consider ugly on earth; of course they do not know any better; to be handsome there, you must have two awkward supporters called legs."

The little Mermaid sighed, and looked with sadness at her tail.

"Let us be contented," said the old lady; "we will dance and romp during the three hundred years we have to live in; that is long enough. To-night we have a grand ball."

There was indeed a magnificence seldom seen on earth. The walls and roof of the great ball-room were of thick but transparent glass. Several hundreds of gigantic conches, purple and emerald, stood in rows on each side, with a blue burning flame, lighting the whole room, and shining through the walls so that the sea outside was illuminated. One could see innumerable fishes, big and small, swimming up to the glass walls; on some the scales shone with a purple lustre, on others like silver and gold. Right through the hall ran a broad stream, and in this danced mermen and mermaids to their own lovely song. No human beings have such lovely voices. The little Mermaid sang more beautifully than any one else, and they clapped their hands to her, and for a moment she felt glad at heart, for she knew she had the loveliest voice of all on land and sea. But she soon thought of the world above; she could not forget the handsome Prince, and her grief

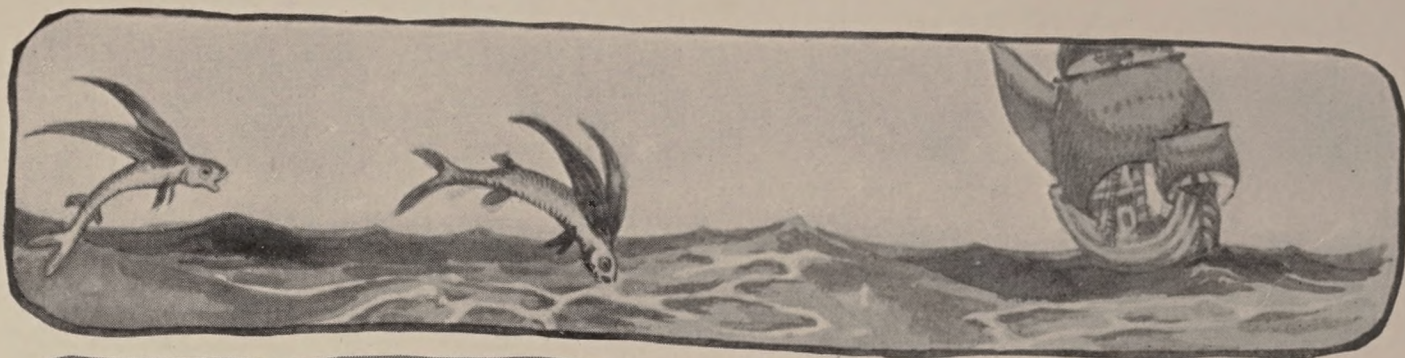


at not having an immortal soul like him. Therefore she stole from her father's palace, and while song and mirth prevailed inside she sat sad in her little garden. Just then she heard a horn sound through the water, and she thought, "Now he sails up there, he whom I love above father and mother, he to whom my thoughts cling and in whose hand I will gladly place the fortune of my life. I will brave anything to win him and an immortal soul. While my sisters are dancing in my father's palace, I will go to the Witch of the Sea, whom I have always been so afraid of; perhaps she can help me."

The little Mermaid left her garden and passed toward the roaring sea-currents, behind which the Witch dwelt. She had never been that way before; here grew no flowers and no weeds, there was only the barren gray sand-bottom stretching toward the currents, in which the water whirled like the wheels of a water-mill, dragging everything it seized into the abyss below. She had to pass through these terrible whirlpools to reach the domain of the Sea Witch, and here she had to pass a hot bubbling slime which the Witch called her peat-bog. Behind it lay her dwelling, in the middle of a weird forest. All trees and bushes were polypi, — half animal and half plant, — looking like hundred-headed snakes growing out of the ground; all the branches were long, slimy arms with fingers like pliant worms, and every limb, from the root to the top, moved. They clung to everything in the sea they could lay hold of, and never let it go again. The little Mermaid stood before them quite frightened, her heart beating with fear so that she nearly turned back; but she thought of the Prince and the human soul, and gathered courage. She tied her long, waving hair firmly to her head, so that the polypi should not catch her by it, laid her arms crosswise over her breast, and sped — as only fishes can — in between the horrible polypi, which stretched their pliant arms and fingers after her. She saw that every one of them held something it had caught, hundreds of little arms holding it like strong iron bands. Men, who had been drowned and sunk, remained like skeletons in the arms of the polypi. They held rudders and charts, skeletons of animals, and even a little Mermaid whom they had caught and smothered; and this was to her the most horrible sight of all.

She now reached the great slimy place in the forest where big fat water-snakes wallowed, showing their disgusting yellowish bellies. In the middle a house had been built of the white skeletons of drowned people; and here sat the Sea Witch, letting a toad eat out of her mouth,











just as we give a canary sugar; she called the horrible fat water-snakes her little chicks, and let them roll on her great slimy breast.

"I know what you want," said the Witch; "and although it is foolish of you, you shall have your way, because it will bring you misfortune, my pretty Princess. You wish to get rid of your tail and have two stumps instead, to walk on like human beings, in order that the young Prince shall fall in love with you, and you may marry him and obtain an immortal soul;" saying which she laughed so loudly and repulsively that the toad and the snakes fell rolling to the ground.

"You are just in time," said the Witch; "to-morrow, when the sun rises, it would have been too late until another year has passed. I will prepare you a draught with which you must swim ashore before the sun rises, and drink it. Your tail will then part, shrinking into what men call pretty legs; but it will hurt just as if a sword were thrust through you. All who see you will say that you are the most beautiful being they have seen. You will retain your floating gait, which no ballet dancer can equal; but every step you take, you will feel as if you trod on sharp knives, and your blood will be shed. If you will endure all this I will help you."

"Yes," said the little Mermaid with trembling voice, thinking of the Prince and of gaining an immortal soul.

"But remember," said the Witch, "that when once you have assumed a human form you can never become a mermaid again. You can never return to your sisters or your father's palace, and if you do not gain the Prince's love, so that for you he forgets father and mother and clings to you with his whole soul, and the priest unites you as man and wife, you will gain no immortal soul. The morning after he has married another, your heart will break and you will turn to foam on the sea."

"I consent," said the little Mermaid, pale as death.

"But you must pay me too," said the Witch, "and it is not little I demand. You have the most beautiful voice of all down here, and with that you no doubt think to charm him; but that voice you must give to me. The best gift you possess I must have for my costly draught. I have to give you my own blood in it, that it may be as cutting as a two-edged sword."

"But if you take my voice, what have I left?" asked the little Mermaid.

"Your lovely figure," said the Witch, "your floating gait, and your



speaking eyes; with those you may well fascinate the heart of a human being. Have you lost courage? Come, put out your little tongue, and I will cut it off in payment for the powerful draught."

"So be it," said the little Mermaid; and the Witch put her kettle on the fire to boil the magic draught.

"Cleanliness is next to godliness," said the Witch, and scoured out the kettle with snakes she had tied together. She then lanced her bosom and let the blood trickle into it, the steam from which formed the most weird figures, enough to frighten any one. Every moment the Witch threw new things into the kettle, and when it began to boil it sounded like the crying of a crocodile.



At last it was ready, and looked like the clearest water.

"Here it is," said the Witch, and cut off the little Mermaid's tongue, who was now dumb, and unable to speak or sing.

"If the polypi try to catch you when you return," said the Witch, "throw only a single drop of this at them and their arms and fingers will break into a thousand pieces."

But that was not necessary, for the polypi drew back in terror when they beheld the draught shining in her hand like a bright star; and she soon passed through the forest, the swamp, and the whirlpool.

She could see her father's palace. The lights were extinguished in the great ball-room, and no doubt they were all asleep there; but still



she dared not go to them, as she was now dumb, and on the point of leaving them forever. She felt as if her heart would break with grief. She stole into the garden, took a flower from the bed of each of her sisters, and kissing her hand a hundred times to the palace, rose up through the deep blue waters.

The sun had not yet risen when she reached the Prince's palace and raised herself on to the marble stairs. The moon shone brightly. She then drank the sharp, burning draught, and she felt as if a two-edged sword had cut her in twain; she fainted from the pain, and lay like dead.

When the sun shone upon the sea she awoke, feeling a cutting pain; but before her stood the handsome young Prince, who fixed his dark eyes upon her, so that she cast down her own; and then she saw that her fish's tail was gone, and that she had instead the prettiest little white legs a young girl could possess. But as she was quite nude, she covered herself with her rich, long hair. The Prince asked her who she was and how she came there; and in response she looked at him so tenderly, but at the same time so sorrowfully, with her deep blue eyes, for speak she could not.

He then took her by the hand and led her into the palace; but every step she made felt, as the Witch had foretold, like walking on sharp knives and pins; but she bore that willingly, and by the hand of the Prince stepped as lightly as a fairy, so that he and everybody else wondered at her lovely, floating gait.

Costly dresses of silk and muslin were given to her, and she was the loveliest maiden in the palace; but dumb she remained, and could neither speak nor sing.

Beautiful female slaves clad in garments of silver and gold came and sang before the Prince and his royal parents. One sang lovelier than the other, and the Prince clapped his hands and smiled to her, which made the little Mermaid so sad; for she knew she had sung much finer, and thought, "Oh, if he only knew that in order to be near him I have sacrificed my voice forever!"

The slaves now moved with pretty, graceful step to the loveliest music, when the little Mermaid rose on the points of her toes, and raising her beautiful snow-white arms, glided across the floor, and danced as none had done before. At every movement her beauty became more striking, and her eyes spoke more to the heart than the singing of the slaves.



All were delighted, especially the Prince, who called her his little foundling; and she danced more and more, although each time her foot touched the ground she felt as if treading on knives. The Prince said she should always be near him, and she was allowed to sleep on a velvet cushion at his door.

He had a male dress made for her, so that she could accompany him on horseback; and they rode through the fragrant woods, where the green boughs stroked her shoulders and the little birds sang behind the new leaves. She climbed the highest mountains with the Prince; and although her tender feet bled so that the others could see it, she only laughed, and followed him till they saw the clouds floating beneath them like a flock of birds migrating to another land.

At night, at the palace, when everybody was asleep, she would go down the broad marble steps, as it cooled her burning feet to stand in the cold sea-water; and then she thought of those in the deep.

One night her sisters came arm in arm, singing so sadly as they floated on the waves. She made signs to them, and when they recognized her told her how she had grieved them all. Afterwards they came every night; and once she saw, far out at sea, her old grandmother, who had not been up for many years, and the Sea King with his crown on his head, stretching their arms toward her; but they did not venture so close to the shore as her sisters.

Every day the Prince liked her better; he loved her as one loves a good, dear child; but to make her his Queen he never dreamt of, and his wife she had to become, or she would not gain an immortal soul, but die the morning after his marriage and become foam upon the sea.

"Do you not love me more than everybody else?" the eyes of the little Mermaid seemed to ask when he took her in his arms and kissed her beautiful forehead.

"Yes, you are dearest to me," said the Prince, "for you have the best heart of them all and are most devoted to me; besides, you are like the young girl I saw once, but whom I feel sure I shall never see again. Once I was on board a ship which foundered; the waves cast me ashore by a holy convent where several young girls were novices, the youngest of whom found me by the shore and saved my life. I saw her but twice; she is the only one whom I could love in this world; but you are like her, and have almost driven her image out of my mind. She belongs to the convent, and therefore my good star has sent me you in her place, and we will never part."



"Oh, he does not know I saved him," thought the little Mermaid; "I carried him through the waves to the woods where the convent stands; I sat behind the foam to see if anybody came. I saw the lovely girl he loves more than me;" and the Mermaid sighed deeply, for she could not cry. "The girl belongs to the convent," she continued; "she will never come into the world any more; they will never meet again; I am near and see him every day; I will tend him, love him, and give my life for him."

Then it was rumored that the Prince was about to marry the daughter of the neighboring King, and that for this purpose he was equipping a fine ship. It was added that he was only going to pay a visit to the King's country; but it was in reality to see his daughter, and he was to be accompanied by a large retinue. But the little Mermaid only shook her head and laughed; she knew the Prince's heart better than anybody else.

"I must travel," he had said to her; "I must see this lovely Princess, as my parents desire it; but to compel me to bring her home as my bride they shall not. I cannot love her, as she is not like the beautiful girl whom you are like. If I ever should choose a bride, it would be you, rather, my dumb foundling with the speaking eyes." And he kissed her rosy lips, played with her long hair, and laid his head on her heart, so that it dreamt of human happiness and an immortal soul.

"You are not afraid of the sea, are you, my dumb child?" he asked as they stood together on the deck of the magnificent vessel which should carry him to the country of the neighboring King; and he told her of storm and calm, of the curious fishes in the deep, and what the divers had seen there; and she smiled at what he told her: for she knew better than anybody all about the bottom of the sea.

In the moonlight night, when all except the man at the wheel were asleep, she sat down by the gunwale of the vessel, gazing down into the transparent water, and she thought she saw her father's palace, where her old grandmother was standing with her silver crown on her head, looking up through the waters to the keel of the ship. Then her sisters rose above the sea; they looked at her very sadly and wrung their white hands. She beckoned to them and laughed, wanting to let them understand that she was well and happy, when a sailor boy came along, and her sisters dived, he believing that what he had seen was foam on the sea.

The next morning the vessel entered the port of the magnificent city



of the neighboring King. All the church-bells pealed, and from the lofty towers trumpet blasts were sounded, while the soldiers formed a guard of honor. Fêtes, balls, and parties followed each other every day, but the Princess had not yet come; she was being brought up far away, it was stated, in a holy convent, where she was taught all royal virtues. At last she came.

The little Mermaid stood anxiously waiting to see her, and she was obliged to confess a lovelier being she had never seen. Her complexion was clear and peachy, and from behind her long dark eyelashes smiled a pair of deep-blue, loving eyes.

"It was you who saved me when I lay like dead on the shore," said the Prince, pressing his blushing bride in his arms.

"I am too happy," he said to the little Mermaid. "What I hardly dared to hope is realized. You ought to rejoice at my happiness, for you love me better than any of them."

And the little Mermaid kissed his hand, and seemed already to feel her heart breaking for his bridal morning would kill her, and change her into foam on the sea.

All the church-bells pealed, and heralds rode through the streets announcing the betrothal. On all altars scented oil was burning in valuable silver lamps, the priests swung censers, and bride and bridegroom gave each other their hands and received the blessing of the bishop.

The little Mermaid stood, clad in gold and silk, holding the train of the bride; but her ears heard not the festive music, nor saw her eyes the holy ceremony: her mind was bent upon her own death and all she had lost.

Already the same evening bride and bridegroom went on board the ship, the guns thundered forth a salvo, the pennants fluttered, and in the middle of the ship a royal tent was raised of gold and purple with the softest cushions: here the bridal couple were to sleep.

The sails swelled in the wind, and the vessel glided softly onward, almost without movement, across the crystal surface.

When it became dark, colored lanterns were lighted, and the sailors danced on the deck. The little Mermaid could not help thinking of the first time she had risen above the sea, when she saw the same splendor and rejoicing, and she whirled along in the dance as the swallow floats when it is pursued, and everybody applauded. She had never danced so well.



She felt as if sharp knives were cutting her tender feet, but she heeded it not: her heart was cut deeper. She knew it was the last night she should see *him* for whom she had renounced family and home, sacrificed her lovely voice, and daily suffered indescribable tortures, without his knowing the least thereof.

It was the last night she breathed the same air as he, and saw the deep sea and the star-studded sky: an eternal night, without thought or dream, awaited *her*, who had no soul and could not gain one.

All was gayety and merriment on board till long past midnight, and she danced and laughed, with the certainty of death in her heart. The Prince kissed his lovely bride, and she played with his dark hair, and arm in arm they went to rest in the magnificent tent.

All was quiet on board; only the man at the wheel was awake, when the little Mermaid laid her white arms on the gunwale of the vessel, gazing towards the east and the dawn of day, for she knew that the first rays of the sun would kill her.

She then saw her sisters rise out of the sea; they were as pale as she, and their long lovely hair fluttered no more in the wind: it was cut off.

"We have given it to the Witch, in order that she shall help us to prevent your death to-night. She has given us a knife; here it is; see how sharp it is! Before the sun rises you must plunge it into the heart of the Prince, and when his warm blood stains your feet they will again turn into a fish's tail, and you will again become a mermaid, can return to us, and live your three hundred years before you become the lifeless, salt sea-foam. Be quick! He or you must die before the sun rises. Our old grandmother mourns so that her silvery hair has fallen off, as ours fell before the scissors of the Witch. Kill the Prince, and come back to us! Be quick! Do you see the purple streak yonder in the sky? In a few minutes the sun rises and you must die." And they heaved a strange deep sigh and sank down between the waves.

The little Mermaid drew back the purple curtain from the tent and saw the beautiful bride asleep with her head on the breast of the Prince. She stooped, kissed his fine forehead, looked at the sky, which was becoming redder and redder, looked at the sharp knife, then at the Prince, who in his dreams murmured the name of his bride, for she alone was in his thoughts; the knife trembled in her hand for an instant, and then — she threw it far out into the sea. The water gleamed purple where it fell, looking as if drops of blood bubbled in the water. Once more she looked at the Prince with sorrowful eyes, then threw



herself from the vessel into the sea and felt her body becoming dissolved into foam.

The sun now rose above the water, and the rays fell so warmly upon the icy-cold foam that the little Mermaid did not feel death. She saw the bright sun, and above her floated hundreds of transparent, beautiful beings, through whom she could see the white sails of the ship and the red clouds in the sky. Their voices sounded like music, but it was so ethereal that no human ear could hear it, nor human eye see them; and though without wings, they were so light that they floated in the air.



The little Mermaid saw she had a form like theirs, which rose higher and higher out of the foam.

"Whither am I going?" she asked; and her voice sounded like that of the other beings, — so ethereal that no earthly music could render it.

"To the Daughters of the Air," they answered. "Mermaids have no immortal soul, and can never gain one unless they obtain the love of a man; their eternal existence depends upon another power. Neither have the Daughters of the Air an immortal soul, but they may gain it by good actions. We fly to the hot countries, where the stifling desert-air kills men, and we waft coolness to them. We diffuse the scent of flowers through the air, and restore life and health. When for three hundred years we have striven to do all the good we can, we obtain an



immortal soul, and share in the eternal bliss of mankind. You, little Mermaid, have all your life striven to do the same as we. You have suffered and endured, and have raised yourself to the sphere of the Spirits of the Air. Now you may, in three hundred years, by your own actions obtain an immortal soul." And the little Mermaid raised her white arms toward God's glorious sun, and for the first time shed tears.

On board the ship there was again life and bustle; she saw the Prince and his lovely bride searching for her, and they looked sorrowfully at the bubbling foam, as if they knew she had plunged into the waves. Invisible, she kissed the bride's forehead, smiled to the Prince, and then rose, with the other Daughters of the Air, up upon the purple clouds floating above. "When three hundred years have elapsed we shall glide thus into heaven."

"We may even get there before," whispered one. "Invisible we glide into the dwellings of mankind where there are children, and for every day we find a child that pleases its parents and gains their love, God shortens the time of our probation. The child does not know when we glide through the room, and when we can smile with pleasure at its behavior a year is taken off the three hundred. But if, on the other hand, we meet with a wicked and naughty child, we must shed tears of sorrow, and every tear adds one day to the time of our probation."







MANY years ago there was an Emperor who was so immensely fond of new clothes that he spent all his money in order to be really well and smartly dressed. He did not care about his soldiers, nor for going to the theatre, or driving about in the public promenades, save to show a new suit. He had a coat for every hour of the day; and just as it is said of a king, he is with the Cabinet, so it was always said here, "The Emperor is in his dressing-room."

The town in which he resided was a very gay one, and many strangers journeyed thither, and one day also two swindlers. They pretended that they were weavers, and said that they could weave the most beautiful cloth any one could ever imagine. Not only were the colors and the design something unusually pretty, but the clothes made from the same had also the remarkable peculiarity that they could not be seen by anybody who was incapable in his office or else was more than ordinarily stupid.

"That would be a fine suit indeed," thought the Emperor; "when I had that on I should be able to discover whom in my empire are unfit for the offices they hold, and be able to distinguish the clever from the stupid. I must have some of that cloth woven for me;" and he gave the two swindlers a large sum of money on account, in order that they should begin their work.

They set up two looms, and appeared as if they were working at something; yet the looms had nothing on them. The swindlers asked constantly for the finest silks and the most magnificent gold cloth; but the proceeds they put into their pockets, and kept on working at the empty looms till far into the night.

"I would indeed like very much to see how far they have got on with the cloth," thought the Emperor; but at the same time he was a little anxious in his mind at the thought that he who was stupid or



unfit for his office could not see it. For his own part he thought he need not be afraid, but he would, however, send somebody to see it first. Every man in the town knew the peculiarity of the cloth, and each one wished to discover how stupid or incapable his neighbor was.

"I will send my old, honest minister to the weavers," thought the Emperor; "he will best be able to see what the cloth is like, for he has sense, and nobody is better fitted for his office than he."

The old, honest minister went to the room where the two swindlers sat working at the empty looms. "Heaven preserve me!" thought the old minister, opening his eyes wide. "Why, I cannot see anything!" But he did not say so.



The two swindlers invited him to come closer, asking him if it was not a lovely pattern and fine colors, pointing to the empty loom. But the poor old minister continued to keep his eyes open, and still could see nothing, for there was nothing to see. "Bless me," he thought, "am I really a fool? I never thought so, and nobody must know it. Am I not fit for my office? No, it will never do to say I cannot see the cloth."

"But you say nothing," said one of the weavers.

"Oh, it is very pretty, exceptionally pretty," said the old minister, looking through his glasses. "What a design and colors! I shall certainly not fail to tell the Emperor that it pleases me very much."

"We are delighted to hear it," said both the weavers, describing the



colors and the peculiar design. The old minister listened attentively, in order to be able to say the same to the Emperor when he returned; and he did so.

The swindlers now asked for more money, and more silk and gold, which they wanted for the stuff. It all went into their pockets, and not a single thread was put upon the looms; but they still continued to pretend to work.

Shortly after, the Emperor sent another honest official to see how the cloth progressed and whether it would soon be ready. It was exactly with him as with the minister: he looked and looked, but as there were only the empty looms, he could see nothing.

"Isn't it a handsome cloth?" asked the two swindlers, pointing to and explaining the pretty design, which did not exist at all.

"I am not a fool," thought the man. "It must be my easy appointment I am not fit for? It is really strange, but I must not show it." And he praised the cloth, which he could not see, and assured them he was highly pleased with the pretty colors and the handsome design. "It is indeed very fine," he said to the Emperor.

Everybody in the town was talking of the handsome cloth, and the Emperor wished to see it himself while it was still on the loom. Accompanied by a number of excellent men, and among them the two old respectable officials who had been there before, he went to the cunning swindlers, who were weaving with all their might, but without anything on the looms.

"Yes; isn't it splendid?" said the two honest officials. "May it please your Majesty to look at the design and the colors?" And they pointed to the empty looms, believing the others could see the cloth.

"What does this mean?" thought the Emperor. "I can see nothing; it is really awful. Am I a fool? Am I not fit to be Emperor? It would be the most frightful thing that could happen."

"Oh, it is very handsome," he said. "It has my most gracious approval." And he nodded approvingly and looked at the empty looms, for he would not say he could not see anything.

The whole *suite* with him looked and looked, but could not see anything more than the others; but they nevertheless said, like the Emperor, "Oh, it is very handsome!" advising him to wear the fine suit on the occasion of the great procession about to take place.

"It is magnificent, splendid, *charmante*," sounded from mouth to mouth, and every one was exceedingly satisfied with it. The Emperor











gave each of the swindlers a cross to wear in the buttonhole as court weavers.

All the night long before the morning the procession was to take place the swindlers were busy, burning more than sixteen wax-candles. People could see they had enough to do to get the Emperor's new suit ready. They pretended to take the cloth from the loom, they cut in the air with big scissors, they sewed with needles without thread, and said at last, "Now the suit is finished."

The Emperor went thither with his principal cavaliers, and the swindlers lifted up their arms, as if holding something, saying, "Here are the trousers; here the coat; here the mantle;" and so forth.



"They are as light as a cobweb; one would think one had nothing on; but that is just the peculiarity of the suit."

All the courtiers said "Yes," but they could not see anything.

"If it might now please your most gracious Majesty to undress, we will fit the new suit on before the great glass there," said the swindlers.

The Emperor undressed entirely, and the swindlers pretended to hand him piece after piece of the new suit; they caught him round the waist, and pretended to fasten something round him: it was the train, and the Emperor twisted and turned before the glass.



"How handsome it is! how well it fits!" they all said. "What a design! what colors! It is a splendid suit!"

"The canopy to be borne over your Majesty in the procession is waiting," said the Grand Master of Ceremonies.

"Very well; I am ready," said the Emperor. "Does n't it fit well?" And he turned round once more before the glass, as if really pretending to look at his splendor.

The pages who were to carry the train pretended they were holding up the train, with their hands in the air, for they would not let any one know they could not see anything.

So the Emperor walked in the procession, under the splendid canopy, and everybody in the streets and the windows said, "Dear me, how fine the Emperor's new suit is! What a handsome train! How well it fits!" Nobody would acknowledge he saw nothing, for then he would have been unfit for his position, or very stupid. None of the Emperor's suits had been such a success.

"But he has nothing on!" said a little boy.

"Good Heavens! listen to the innocent thing's voice!" said the father. And one whispered to the other what the child had said.

"A little child says he has nothing on," some said.

"But he *has* nothing on!" all the people exclaimed at last, and the cry made the Emperor's marrow creep, for he agreed with them; but he thought he must put a good face upon it till the end. And he kept himself more upright than before, and the pages continued to carry the train which did not exist.







THERE were once five-and-twenty tin soldiers, who were all brothers, for they were born together of an old tin spoon. They had guns at the shoulder, looked straight before them, and their uniform was very pretty, being red and blue. The very first word they heard in this world, "Tin soldiers," was when the lid was taken off the box in which they lay; and that was exclaimed by a little boy who was clapping his hands, the tin soldiers being his birthday present. He stood them up on the table; each one was like the other, only one being different, having only one leg, as he had been cast last and there was no more tin; but he stood nevertheless as firmly on his one leg as the others on their two, and it is of him we shall tell.

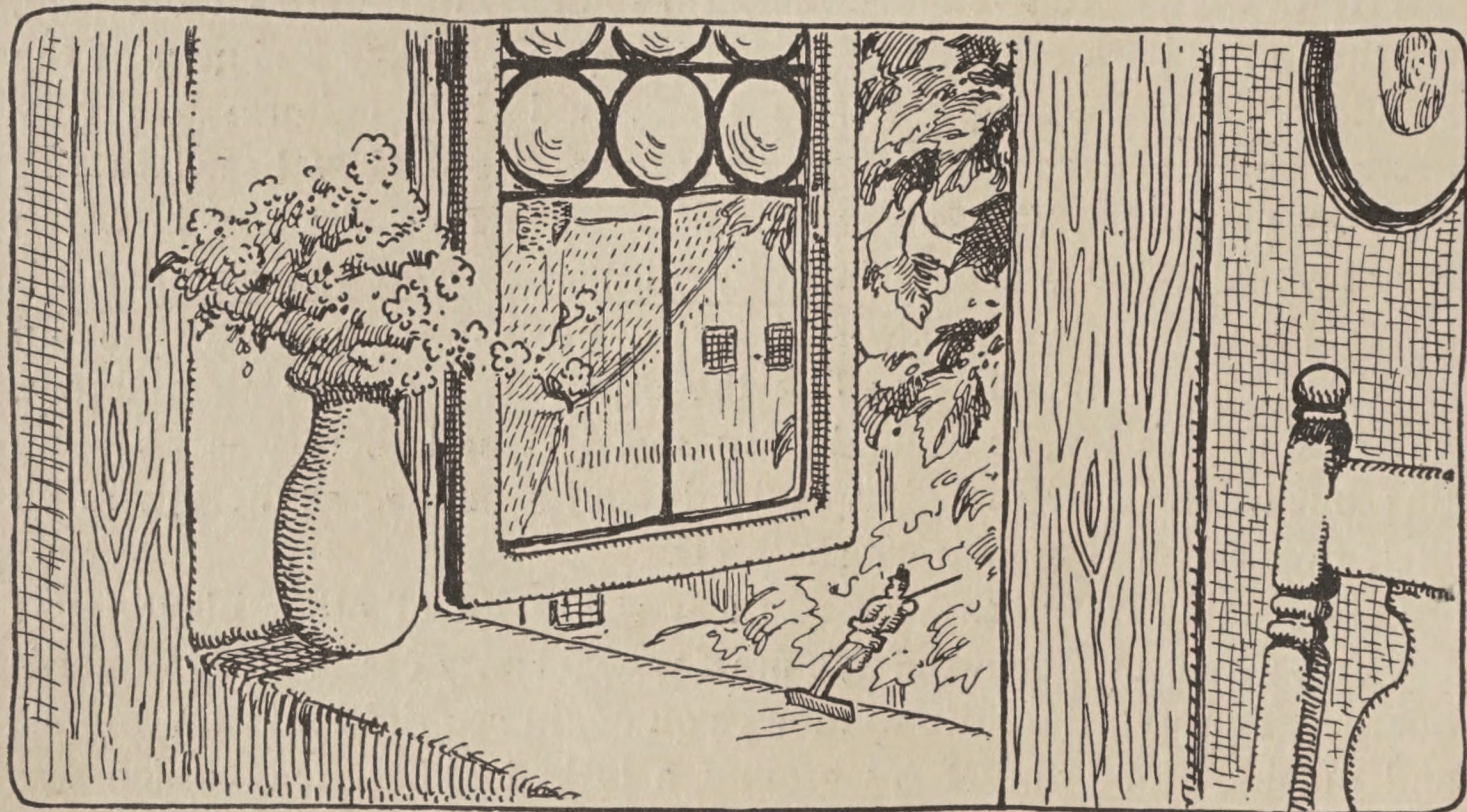
On the table where they stood there was a lot of other playthings; but that which attracted the eye most was a pretty castle made of cardboard. Through the little windows you could see right into the rooms, and outside stood tiny trees around a little looking-glass, which was meant for a lake, and which reflected some wax swans upon it. It was all so very pretty; but still prettier was a little maiden, standing in the open door, and cut from cardboard; but she had on a dress of the finest muslin, and a little blue sash across her shoulders, in the middle of which was fastened a glittering tinsel star as big as her face. The little maiden stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer, and she raised one leg so high that the Tin Soldier could not see it, so he thought that she too had only one leg like himself.

"That would be just the wife for me," he thought; "but she is high-born, and lives in a castle, while I have only a box, and *that* there are twenty-five of us to share. It is not a fit place for her, but I will nevertheless try to make her acquaintance." And he laid himself down behind a snuff-box on the table, whence he could have a real good



look at the pretty little lady, who continued to stand on one leg without overbalancing herself.

At night the rest of the tin soldiers were put into the box, and the family in the house went to bed. Then the playthings began to play among themselves at giving "at homes," dances, and go to war, so that the tin soldiers began to kick in their box, as they wanted to share the fun; but they could not get the lid off. The nut-crackers turned summersaults, while the pencil danced a hornpipe on the slate, and there was such a noise that the canary woke and began to join in, and that in verse too. The only two who remained quiet were the Tin Soldier and the little Dancer; she stood still erect on the tip of her toe,



with her arms stretched out, and he as firmly on his one leg; but he did not take his eyes off her for an instant.

Just then the clock struck twelve, and Bang! the lid flew off the snuff-box. There was, however, no snuff in it, only a little black imp like a "Jack-in-the-box."

"Tin Soldier," said the imp, "you keep your eyes to yourself!" But the Soldier pretended not to hear him.

"Well, you just wait till to-morrow," said the imp.

The next morning, as soon as the children were up, the Tin Soldier was placed on the window-ledge; and, whether it was the imp or the draught, — anyhow, the window suddenly flew open, and the Soldier fell headlong from the second story into the street. It was a frightful fall;











he held his leg straight upwards and landed on his shako, with his gun embedded between two paving-stones.

The servant and the little boy went down at once to find him; but though they nearly trod upon him they could not see him. Had the Tin Soldier called out, "I am here!" they would have found him, no doubt; but he did not consider it soldier-like to shout while in uniform.

It began to rain, the drops falling faster and faster, and it soon came down in torrents.

When the rain was over, two street-urchins came along, one of whom exclaimed, "Look! there lies a Tin Soldier; let us give him a sail in the gutter."

And they made a boat out of a piece of newspaper, put the soldier into it, and so he sailed down the gutter, both boys running alongside, clapping their hands. Oh, how high the waves ran in the gutter, and how strong the current was! But it had been pouring down. The paper boat bobbed up and down, and sometimes spun round so fearfully that the Soldier trembled; but he remained firm, and, not moving a muscle and looking straight before him, kept his gun at the shoulder.

Suddenly the boat drifted under a broad crossing and it became as dark as in the box.

"Where am I going to now, I wonder?" he thought. "I am sure this is the imp's doing. However, if only the little girl was in the boat with me it might really be twice as dark."

Now a large water-rat appeared, which lived under the crossing.

"Have you a pass?" it asked. "Hand it over!" But the Tin Soldier did not say a word, and only clasped his gun firmer. The boat shot along, and the rat followed. Oh, how fearfully it ground its teeth, while calling out to bits of wood and straw, "Stop him! stop him! he has not paid toll, and he has not shown a pass."

But the current became stronger and stronger; the Tin Soldier now saw daylight where the crossing ceased, but he heard also a roaring noise which might well terrify the bravest. Only imagine; where the crossing ceased, the water in the gutter fell straight into a big canal, — a descent as dangerous as that of a waterfall to us.

Now he was so near it he could not stop the boat, and down it went, but the poor Tin Soldier remained as firm as he possibly could; nobody could say that he even blinked his eyes.

The boat spun round three or four times, filled nearly to the edge, and was on the point of sinking. The Tin Soldier was in water up to



his neck, while the boat sank deeper and deeper; the paper became more and more undone, and now the water was above the head of the Soldier. At that moment he thought of the pretty little Dancer, whom he should never see again. Now the paper broke, he fell through, and was in the same instant swallowed by a big fish.

Oh, how dark it was in there! much darker than under the crossing; and so little room too; but the Tin Soldier remained steadfast, lying full length with his gun in his arm.

The fish jumped about in the most violent manner; but all of a sudden it became quiet, and something like a ray of light penetrated



into it. The light became quite distinct, and somebody said aloud, "A Tin Soldier!"

The fish had been caught, sold in the fish-market, and carried into the kitchen, where the cook was cutting it up with a big knife. She took him with her two fingers and carried him to the sitting-room, where everybody wished to see the remarkable being who had travelled about in the stomach of a fish; but the Tin Soldier was not at all proud.

They placed him on the table, and — wonder of wonders! — the Tin Soldier was in the same room as before; he saw the same children, and the same playthings on the table. The fine castle and the pretty little Dancer were still there; she was still on her one leg, with the other



high in the air; she too was firm. The Tin Soldier was so affected he could have cried, but that would not have been soldier-like. He looked at her, and she at him, but neither said anything.

In the next moment one of the little boys threw the Soldier, without giving any reason, right into the fire; it was, no doubt, the imp's doing again.

The Tin Soldier stood in the full glare, and felt a heat quite dreadful; but whether it was the fire or love he knew not. He had quite lost his colors, but nobody could tell whether on the journey or through grief. He looked at the little maiden, and she at him; he felt he was melting, but still he stood firm with his gun at his shoulder. Just then a door was opened, and the draught catching the Dancer, she flew like a sylph right into the fire where the Soldier stood, blazed up, and disappeared.

The Tin Soldier had now melted into a lump, and when the servant the next morning cleared out the ashes, she found him in the form of a tin heart, while of the Dancer only the tinsel star remained, and that was burned quite black.







FAR away, whither the swallows fly when winter comes to us, there lived a King who had eleven sons and one daughter, Elizabeth. The eleven brothers—they were of course princes—went to school with a star on the breast and a sword at the side, and wrote with diamond pencils on slates framed with gold, and read and wrote so well one could at once see they were princes. Their sister, Elizabeth, sat on a little stool of crystal glass, and had a picture-book which had cost half a kingdom.

How happy were those children! but it was not to last.

Their father, who was King of the whole country, married a wicked Queen, who was very unkind to the poor children. Already on the wedding-day they felt this. There was a great fête at the castle, and the children played at “giving a ball;” but instead of having plenty of cakes and fruit, as before, the Queen gave them a cupful of sand, saying that they might fancy it was something nice.

The following week she sent the little Elizabeth into the country to a peasant’s cottage; and before long she made the King believe so many bad things she told him about the poor princes, that he became quite indifferent to what became of them.

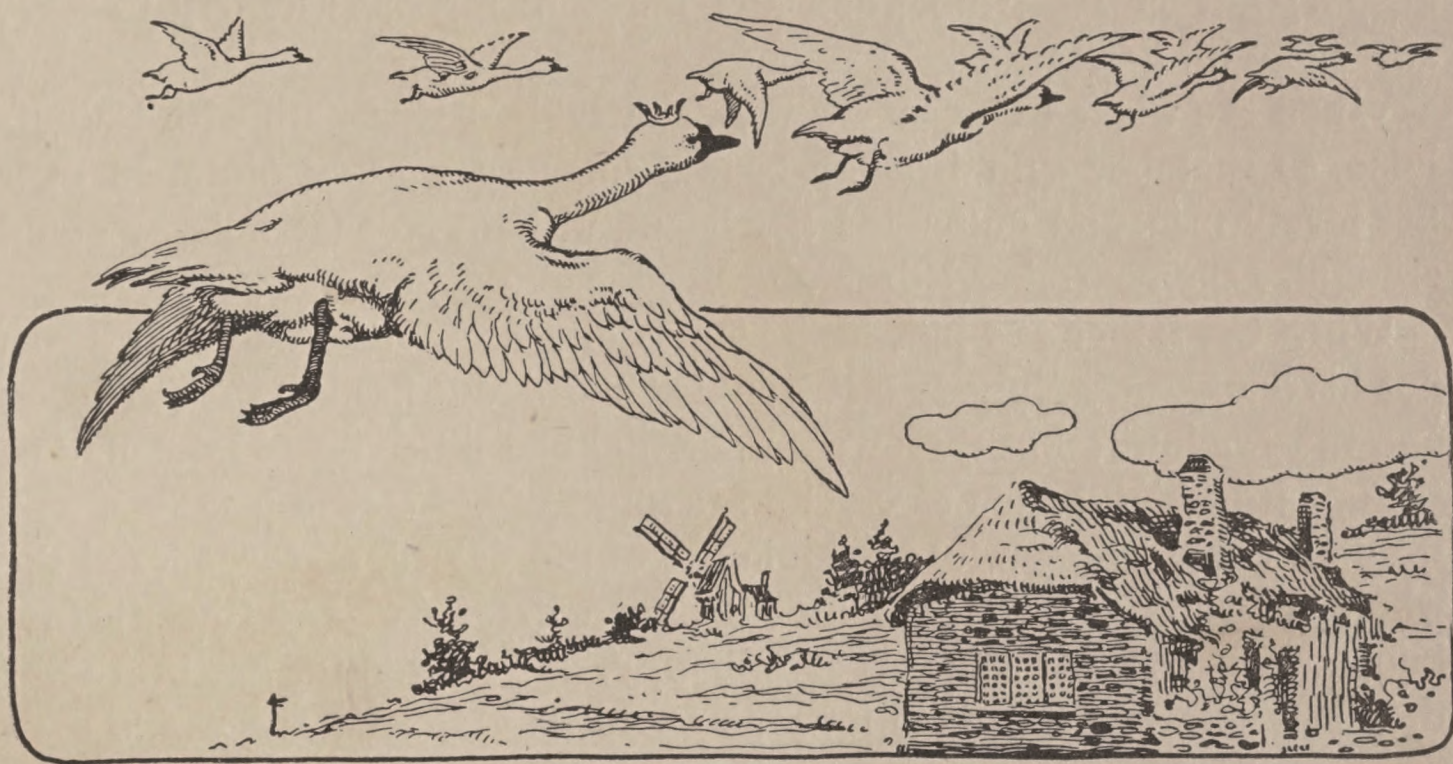
“Fly out into the world, and take care of yourselves,” said the wicked Queen; “fly in the form of great birds without voices.” But she could not do them all the injury that she really wished, and they became eleven beautiful wild swans, which with a weird cry flew out of the windows across the park and the woods.

It was still quite early when they flew past the cottage where Elizabeth was lying asleep. They flew several times round the roof, twisting their long necks and flapping their wings, but nobody heard or saw them. They had to continue their flight far into the wide world, and they flew into a big dark forest reaching down to the shore.



Poor little Elizabeth stood in the peasant's cottage playing with a green leaf, — for she had nothing else to play with, — and she pricked a hole in it, looked through it at the sun, and she thought she saw her brothers' bright eyes; while every time the hot rays fell on her cheek she thought of their kisses.

One day passed like another. If the wind sighed in the rose-bushes outside, it said to the roses, "Who can possibly be more beautiful than you?" But the roses shook their heads and said, "Lizzie is." And if on Sundays the old peasant-woman sat in the porch reading the Bible, the wind turned the leaves and said to it, "Who can possibly



be as good as you ordain?"<sup>1</sup> "Lizzie is," the Bible would answer. And it was but the truth what the roses and the Bible said.

When she reached the age of fifteen she was called home; but when the Queen saw how lovely she was, she became very wroth and jealous of her, and would gladly have changed her into a wild swan; but she dared not just then, as the King wished to see his daughter.

Early in the morning the Queen went into the bath-room, which was built of marble and furnished with the softest cushions and the choicest carpets, taking three toads with her, which she kissed, saying to the first, "Place yourself on Elizabeth's head when she gets into the bath, so that she may become as stupid as you;" and to the second,

<sup>1</sup> A slight and justifiable alteration of the original. — TR.



“Place yourself on her brow, so that she may become as ugly as you, and that her father may not know her;” while to the third she said, “Settle yourself near her heart, and let her get a mind so wicked that she will suffer for it.” Then she threw the toads into the water, which assumed a greenish color thereby, called Elizabeth, undressed her, and let her get into the bath. At the same instant she dipped under the water one toad settled in her hair, one on her brow, and the third on her bosom; but she did not seem to notice it. When she rose from the water, three red poppies floated on the surface. If the toads had not been poisonous and kissed by the Witch, they would have been changed into red roses. Flowers they still became by resting on her head and bosom; but she was too good and innocent for the witchery to have any effect on her.

When the wicked Queen saw that, she rubbed Elizabeth with walnut-juice, so that her skin became brown, smeared a nasty ointment over her lovely face, and entangled her beautiful hair, so that nobody could recognize the charming Elizabeth.

When her father saw her, he became quite frightened, and said it was not his daughter. Nobody else would acknowledge her but the yard-dog and the swallows; but they were poor, and had little voice in the matter.

Poor Elizabeth began to cry, and thought of her eleven brothers, who were all gone. Sorrowful she stole out of the palace, and wandered the whole day across fields and moors into a great forest. She did not know whither to go; she was so unhappy, and longed for her brothers; they had surely been driven into the world like herself; she would seek them.

She had only been in the forest a little while when night set in. She had lost her way, but lay down peacefully on the soft moss, said her prayers, and rested her head against the stem of a tree. Everything was so quiet and calm, the air so balmy, and round about in the grass and on the moss shone hundreds of glow-worms like green fire, and when she touched the boughs with her hands they fell down like little shooting stars.

All through the night she dreamt of her brothers; they played again together as when children, wrote with diamond pencil on gold slates, and looked into the beautiful picture-book which had cost half a kingdom; but they did not write figures and words as before; no, they related their bravest deeds, all that they had experienced and said, and in the picture-book all was alive: the birds sang, and people











came out of the book and spoke to her; but as soon as she turned the leaves they again jumped into their places, so that there should be no confusion among them.

When she arose, the sun was already high; she could not see it, as the boughs of the high trees were so close, but the rays played outside like a fluttering veil of gold. The greensward smelt so fresh, and the birds very nearly alighted on her shoulders. She could hear the noise of a brook; it was a water-course falling into a pond with the softest sand bottom. It was almost surrounded by close underwood, but in one spot the stags had made a path, and by this Elizabeth reached the water, which was so clear that had not the wind shaken the trees and shrubs they would have appeared as if painted on the bottom.

When she saw her own face, she became very frightened, so brown and ugly she was; but as soon as she had rubbed her face with her little hand her white skin came out, and she took off her garments and went into the refreshing water. A lovelier princess did not exist in the whole world.

When she had dressed, and plaited her long hair, she went to a bubbling spring, drank some water from her hand, and walked farther into the forest without knowing whither. She thought of her brothers, and of the good Lord, who would not desert her, for He made the wild apples grow to feed the hungry. She soon found some on a tree, the fruit weighing down the boughs. On these she made a meal, and then wandered into the darkest part of the forest. It was so still here she could hear her own footsteps and every leaf rustling under her foot. Not a bird could be seen, and not a ray of the sun could penetrate the thick leafy covering. The tall stems stood so close together that they had the appearance of wooden palisades on all sides, and there was a solitude here she had never experienced before.

The night following was very dark, not a single glow-worm shining on the moss, and she went sorrowful to sleep. Then she fancied that the boughs above her parted, and that the Lord, surrounded by little angels, looked down upon her.

When she awoke, she knew not whether it was a dream or reality.

When she had walked some distance, she met an old woman with berries in a basket, who gave her some. Elizabeth asked her if she had seen eleven princes ride through the forest. "No," the woman said; "but yesterday I saw eleven swans with golden crowns on their heads in the river close by."



And she led Elizabeth a little way farther, to a hill, below which ran a river nearly overshadowed by leafy trees.

Elizabeth said good-by to the old woman, and wandered along the river till it flowed into the sea.

The great lovely ocean lay before the young maiden, but not a single vessel or boat was to be seen, and how, then, was she to get farther? She looked at the thousands of pebbles on the shore, polished and rounded by the water. Glass, iron, stones, everything piled up there, had been given the same shape by the water, which was nevertheless softer than her hand. "The water never ceases rolling, and the hard substances become moulded; neither will I tire," she thought. "Thanks for your teachings, you crystal, rolling waves. Some time, so my heart tells me, you shall carry me to my dear brothers."

On the weed cast up by the sea lay eleven white swan's feathers, which she gathered; there were drops of water on them, but whether they were dew or tears nobody could tell. It was lovely by the shore, but she did not notice it, for the sea was in constant motion, displaying in a few hours more variety than a lake in a year. If a great dark cloud came floating above, the sea seemed to say, "I, too, can look dark," and the wind blew harder, and the waves donned their white caps; and if the clouds were red and the wind slept, the sea looked like a rose-leaf; now it was green, now white; but however calm it was, there was always a gentle motion by the shore: the sea swelled like the breast of a sleeping child.

As the sun was setting, Elizabeth saw eleven white swans, with golden crowns on their heads, flying toward the shore. One flew behind the other, looking like a long white ribbon. Elizabeth went up on the hill by the shore, hiding herself behind a shrub, and the eleven swans settled close by, flapping their great white wings.

Just as the sun set, the swans' feathers fell off, and there stood Elizabeth's brothers, the eleven princes. She uttered a loud cry; for, though they had altered much, she was sure it was they, and she threw herself into their arms, called them by name, and they became delighted at seeing their little sister, who had grown so lovely. They laughed and wept, and had soon told one another how cruel their step-mother had been to them all.

"We are all doomed to fly about as swans as long as the sun is up," said the eldest brother, "but as soon as it sets, we regain our natural form; therefore we have to take care to have land under our feet at



sunset, for if we are high up in the air we should fall down like other human beings. We do not dwell here. On the other side of the water is a land as beautiful as this, but the way thither is long; we have to cross a great ocean, and there is no island on the way where to rest for the night, only a solitary rock rises from the middle of the ocean. It is not bigger than we can just find a resting-place on it when sitting close together, and when the sea is high the waves dash over us; but still we are thankful for it. There we rest for the night in our human form, and without this rock we should never be able to visit our beloved country, as we require the two longest days in the year for our flight.



Only once a year we may visit our home; we may remain there eleven days, and fly across this great forest, whence we can see the palace in which we were born and where our father resides, and also the church in which our mother lies buried. Here we imagine that the trees and shrubs are related to us; here the wild horses canter over the plain as in our childhood; here the charcoal-burner sings the same old songs to which we danced when young; here is our country; hither we feel drawn, and here we have found you, dear little sister. Two days more we may remain here; then we must depart for the other beautiful land across the sea, but which is not our country. How shall we be able to take you with us, having neither vessel nor boat?"

"Oh, how can I save you?" said the sister.



And they talked nearly the whole night, sleeping only a few hours.

Elizabeth woke at the sound of swans' wings above her. Her brothers were already transformed, and they flew in great circles, and then far away. But one, the youngest, remained, and it laid its head in her lap, and she stroked its snow-white neck. They were together the whole day, and toward evening the others returned, and as soon as the sun had set they assumed their human form.

"To-morrow we leave here, and may not return for a year," said the eldest; "but we cannot leave you here. Have you courage to come with us? My arm being strong enough to carry you through the forest, we shall all of us be strong enough to carry you across the sea."

"Oh, yes, take me with you!" said Elizabeth.

The whole night was spent in making a net of soft willow-bark and tough reeds, and it was large and strong. On this Elizabeth went to rest, and when the sun rose and the brothers were transformed into wild swans, they seized it with their beaks, and flew with their dear sister, who was still asleep, high up toward the clouds. And as the sun shone right on her face, one of the swans flew above her head so as to shade it with its big wings. They were far out at sea when Elizabeth awoke; she thought she was still dreaming, so strange it seemed to her to be borne through the air across the sea. At her side lay a bough with delicious berries on it, and a bundle of sweet roots which had been gathered for her by her youngest brother, and she smiled gratefully to him, recognizing him flying above her and shading her.

They were so high up that the greatest ships they saw below looked like gulls on the sea. A great cloud was behind them; it was a mountain, and Elizabeth saw her own and the shadows of the eleven swans on it in gigantic size. It was the most magnificent spectacle she had ever beheld, but as the sun rose higher the floating shadows disappeared.

All the day long they kept on their course with the speed of arrows; but still they flew slower than on other occasions, as they had Elizabeth to carry. A storm approached, and evening drew near. Trembling with terror, Elizabeth saw the sun sink, and still the solitary rock in the sea was not to be seen; it seemed as if the swans redoubled their efforts. Oh! she was the cause of their slow flight. When the sun set they would become human beings, fall into the sea, and be drowned. She prayed ardently to her Father, but still the rock was not in sight.











The dark clouds drew nearer and nearer, and the fierce gusts of wind bespoke a storm; the clouds looked like a great threatening wall, which moved forward heavy as lead, and one flash of lightning followed upon another.

Now the sun's disc touched the horizon. Elizabeth's heart trembled; but then the swans shot down so quickly she thought she was falling, but they still flew. The sun was half under water, when, lo! she beheld the little rock, not bigger than the head of a seal, above water. The sun sank rapidly; it was now only as big as a star, when she touched the rock with her foot, and at the same moment the sun went out like the last spark in a burnt piece of paper. She saw her brothers stand around her arm-in-arm, but there was only room for herself and them. The waves swept over the rock and drenched them, the sky looked as if on fire, and peals of thunder followed each other; but sister and brothers held one another's hands, and sang a hymn which gave them courage.

At daybreak the air was calm and quiet, and as soon as the sun rose the swans flew away from the rock with Elizabeth. The sea was still rough, and when they were high up in the air the white foam on the dark-green water looked like a number of swans floating on the waves.

When the sun had risen higher, Elizabeth saw before her, as if floating in the air, a mountainous land capped with glittering glaciers, and a palace nearly a mile long, with striking rows of columns rising one above the other, while below rose forests of palms and the most gorgeous flowers.

She asked if it was the land they were bound for; but the swans shook their heads, for what she saw was the lovely fairy-castle of *Fata Morgana*, whither it would be fatal to carry any human being. As Elizabeth was looking at it, mountains, forests, and palace fell into a chaotic mass, and in their places rose twenty grand cathedrals, all alike, with high towers and pointed windows. She thought she heard the swell of the organs, but it was that of the sea. When close upon the cathedrals, they changed into a fleet of ships sailing below her; she looked down and found that it was only a mist sweeping over the sea. A constant change went on before her eyes, when at last she beheld the real land whither she was bound. There rose lovely blue mountains, with cedar forests, towns, and castles; and long before the sun set she was seated on a mountain, before a great cave overgrown with splendid green creepers, looking like embroidered tapestry.



"Now we shall see what you will dream to-night," said her youngest brother, showing her sleeping apartment to her.

"May I but dream how I shall save you!" she said.

The thought occupied her very much, and she prayed to God to assist her, and even in her sleep continued her prayer. Then it seemed to her as if she were flying high up in the air, toward the palace of *Fata Morgana*, and that the Fairy came to meet her, so beautiful and resplendent; but still she was like the old woman who gave her the berries in the forest and told her of the swans with the golden crowns.

"Your brothers may be saved," she said; "but have you the courage and perseverance?" The sea is certainly softer than your fine hands, and still moulds the hard stones; but the sea has no heart, and does not know the pain that your fingers will suffer; it does not endure the agony you will have to. Do you see the stinging nettle I hold in my hand? Many like it grow around the cave in which you sleep; only those which grow there and in the churchyards are of use, remember that! Those you must gather, however much they sting your skin into blisters; crush them with your feet; and you will obtain yarn, of which you must spin eleven shirts with long sleeves; throw these over the eleven swans, and the witchery will be broken. But remember, from the moment you begin this task, and till it is fulfilled, you must not speak, even if it takes you years; the first words you utter will penetrate like a dagger into the hearts of your brothers; on your tongue their lives depend. Remember all this!"

And at the same moment she touched her with the nettle, and it stung her like fire, so that she awoke. It was broad daylight, and close by her lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dream. Then she fell on her knees and thanked God, and went out of the cave to begin her task.

She caught the nasty nettles with her hands, and they burnt her like fire, great blisters forming on her hands and arms; but that she suffered gladly for the sake of rescuing her dear brothers. She crushed every nettle with her soft naked feet, and wound the green yarn.

As the sun was setting, her brothers returned, and when they found her so silent they thought it was some fresh witchery of their wicked step-mother; but when they saw her hands, they understood what she was doing for their sake, and the youngest brother began to cry; but where his tears fell the pain ceased, and she felt not the burning blisters.



She spent the night in her task, for she had no peace till she had saved her brothers; and the whole of the next day, while the swans were absent, she sat in solitude, but the time had never passed so quickly with her. One shirt was already finished, and she began the second one.

Then all of a sudden horns sounded among the mountains, and she became very frightened; but the sound came nearer, and she heard the hounds baying; terrified, she ran into the cave, tied the nettles she had collected, and the shirt, into a bundle, and sat down upon it.

At the same moment a dog came out of the underwood, and soon after another; they barked furiously, ran back, and returned, and shortly afterward all the huntsmen stood outside the cave, the handsomest of whom was the King of the land; and he went up to Elizabeth, saying, "How did you get here, you lovely child?"

Elizabeth shook her head; she did not dare to speak, for on that depended her brothers' life and rescue; and she hid her hands under her apron, so that the King should not see her sufferings.

"Come with me," he said; "you must not remain here; and if you are as good as you are beautiful, I will give you dresses of silk and velvet, and place a golden crown on your head, and you shall reside in my finest palace."

He lifted her upon his horse, though she cried and wrung her hands; but the King said, "I wish only to be kind to you, and some day you will thank me therefor." And he rode off with her before him on the horse, the huntsmen following.

At sunset the splendid royal city with its spires and cupolas lay before them, and the King led her into his palace, where great fountains splashed in lofty marble halls, and beautiful pictures decorated the walls; but she had no eyes for anything, and wept from grief. Indifferent, she let the tiring-maids dress her in royal robes, twine pearls in her hair, and draw soft gloves on her blistered hands.

When she appeared in all her splendor, she was so lovely that the Court bowed lower for her than before, and the King at once chose her for his bride, although the Archbishop shook his head, and whispered that the lovely forest maiden was sure to be a witch, who had blinded his eyes and deceived his heart.

But the King paid no heed to this, and let the bands play, and had the costliest dishes set forth, while the loveliest maidens danced before them. And she was led through fragrant gardens into magnificent



chambers; but not a smile crossed her lips or shone in her eye: grief was in her face, as if being her heirloom. The King opened a little room adjoining her sleeping apartment, which was covered and hung with the costliest mats, and exactly like her cave; on the floor lay the yarn she had made from the nettles, and on the wall hung the shirt which was ready. One of the huntsmen had brought it all away as a curiosity.

"Here you may fancy you are still in your old home," said the King. "Here is the work you were engaged in, and in the midst of all your splendor it will please you to look back upon that time."

When Elizabeth saw what was uppermost in her mind, a smile played on her lips, and the blood returned to her cheeks; she thought of the saving of her brothers, and kissed the King's hand, who pressed her to his heart and let the marriage be announced. The lovely, dumb forest maiden was to become the Queen of the land.

The Archbishop whispered evil words into the King's ear, but they did not touch his heart. The wedding took place, and the Archbishop had himself to place the crown on her head, which he did, pressing it in anger down on her forehead so heavily that it hurt her. But she felt a greater pain in her heart, through the loss of her brothers. Her mouth was closed, for a single word would have been the death of her brothers; but her eyes spoke love to the kind, handsome King, who did all he could to please her. Every day she became fonder of him. Oh, had she only dared to confide to him her sufferings! But she must remain dumb; dumb she had to accomplish her task. Therefore she stole in the night from his side into the little secret chamber, and finished one shirt after another; but when she began the seventh she had no more yarn.

She knew that the nettles she required grew in the churchyard, and that she must gather them herself; but how to get there?

"Oh, what is the pain in my hands compared with the sufferings of my heart?" she thought. "I must risk it. God will protect me."

With a trembling heart, as if she was doing something wrong, she stole in the moonlit night into the garden, passed through the long avenues into the deserted streets, to the churchyard, where she beheld a number of vampires sitting on the gravestones, quite naked, who were digging up bodies from the newly made graves and eating the flesh. Elizabeth had to pass close to them, and they glared at her; but, saying a prayer, she gathered the nettles and returned home.











Only one person had seen her, namely, the Archbishop. He was up while others were sleeping, and he now became convinced that the Queen was a witch, who had bewitched the King and the whole people.

In the confessional he told the King what he had seen, and what he thought of it; but as the words passed his lips the saintly images around shook their heads, as if to say, "It is not so; Elizabeth is innocent." But the Bishop interpreted the action differently; namely, that they were shaking their heads at her wickedness. Two big tears rolled down the King's cheeks, and he went home with a doubting heart. Pretending to sleep at night, but not closing an eye, he felt Elizabeth rising from



the bed, which she repeated every night; and every time he followed her and saw her go into her secret chamber.

Every day he became more gloomy. Elizabeth noticed it, but did not suspect the cause. It made her, however, uneasy, and she suffered much for her brothers. Her tears fell like sparkling diamonds on the purple and velvet, though everybody who saw her splendor envied her.

At last she had finished all the shirts but one, and for that she had neither yarn nor nettles. Once more, for the last time, she had to go to the churchyard. She thought with horror of the lonely walk and the disgusting vampires, but her resolution was as firm as her confidence in God.

Elizabeth went, but was followed by the Archbishop and the King,



who saw her go in through the gate of the churchyard; and when they came up, they saw the vampires sitting on the gravestones, and the King turned his head away at the sight, thinking of her who had only just quitted his side.

"The people must judge her," he said; and the people condemned her to be burnt.

From the stately apartments of the palace she was taken to a dark and damp dungeon, where the wind whistled through the grated windows, and instead of velvet and silk cushions to lie on she was given the bundle of nettles she had gathered, as well as the shirts she had made. But they could not have given her anything she cared more for, and cheerfully she set to work, and prayed to God. Outside, the mob were singing songs in derision of her, and nobody said a kind word to her.

Toward night she heard the whirring of swan's wings near the grating of her window. It was her youngest brother, who had discovered her place of confinement, and she wept with pleasure, though she knew that probably it was her last night; now, however, her task was nearly finished, and her brothers were near her.

The Archbishop came to stay with her during her last hours, according to his promise to the King; but she implored with signs and eyes to be left alone; for this night was the last of her task, and without it all her sufferings, tears, and sleepless nights would be endured in vain. The Bishop went away after upbraiding her; but she knew she was innocent, and continued her work.

Little rats came to assist her as far as in their power by carrying the nettle to her feet, while a thrush settled itself at the window and sang merrily the whole night, so that she should not lose her courage.

It was still daybreak, and it wanted an hour to sunrise, when suddenly the eleven brothers appeared at the gate of the palace asking to see the King; but they were told they could not, as the King was still in bed and nobody dared to wake him. They begged and they threatened, so that the guard was called; but in the same instant the King appeared, asking what the noise was about, when, lo! the sun arose, the princes disappeared, and eleven wild swans flew away over the palace.

A great number of people were passing out of the city to see Elizabeth burned. A wretched hack drew the cart on which she sat dressed in coarse sackcloth. Her long golden hair hung loosely



down her shoulders, her cheeks were deadly pale, and she moved her lips slightly as she wove the green yarn; for even on the road to another world she did not cease working. The ten shirts lay at her feet, and she was working on the eleventh.

The mob began to jeer at her, calling out, "Look at the witch, how she mumbles! She has n't even got a prayer-book; she prefers her wicked work. Take it away from her!"

And they crowded in upon her to tear it away, when eleven white swans flew up, and seated themselves around her on the cart, striking about with their great wings.



The people fell back in terror, whispering, "It is a sign from above! She is certainly innocent!"

Then the executioner caught her by the hand, and at the same moment she threw the eleven shirts over the swans, and, lo! there stood the eleven handsome princes; but the youngest had a swan's wing instead of his right arm, as Elizabeth had not been able to finish it.

"Now I may speak," she said. "I am innocent."

And the people, who saw what had happened, bowed down before



her as to a saint; but she sank senseless into her brothers' arms, quite overcome with anxiety and pain.

"Yes, she is innocent," said the eldest brother, relating all; and while he spoke, a scent as from a thousand roses filled the air, for every fagot of wood in the pyre had struck root and begun to grow. There was soon a hedge of red roses, and above them all hung a snow-white flower, shining like a star, which the King broke and laid on Elizabeth's breast, and she awoke with peace and happiness in her heart.

All the church-bells began to peal of their own accord; while thousands of birds flocked around, and there was a procession back to the palace such as nobody had ever beheld.







THERE was once a merchant who was so rich that he could have paved the whole street in which his house stood with silver, and perhaps also a by-street running into it. But he did not do any such thing; he knew better what use to make of his money. If he paid away a penny it came back to him a shilling: that was the sort of merchant he was. But then he died.

Now the son inherited all his money, and he began to live a merry life, went to balls and parties every night, made kites out of bank-notes, and threw ducks and drakes on the water with gold pieces instead of pebbles, so it was not to be wondered at that the money went fast; and it did too.

At last he had nothing left but a shilling-piece, and no other clothes than a pair of slippers and an old dressing-gown, so of course his friends "cut him," for they could no longer go about with him; but one of them, who was more kind-hearted than the others, sent him an old trunk, telling him "to pack up." That was all very well to tell him to do, but he had nothing to pack. So he placed himself in the trunk.

It was a very funny trunk, however, for as soon as the lock was pressed, the trunk flew into the air; that it did now, and it flew with him up through the chimney, and high up above the clouds, farther and farther away, till the bottom began to creak, and he became greatly afraid it would break to pieces, when he would have had a nice tumble. Heaven forbid!

At last he reached the land of the Turks, and having concealed the trunk under some leaves in a forest, he went into the town; for he might well do that, as the Turks, of course, went about in slippers and dressing-gowns, like himself.

On his way he met a nurse with a little child.



"Look here, nurse," he said; "what castle is that close to the town, with windows so high up?"

"The King's daughter lives there," said the nurse. "It has been prophesied that she shall be unhappy on account of her sweetheart, and therefore nobody is allowed to come near her unless the King and Queen are present."

"I am much obliged for what you have told me," said the merchant's son; and going into the forest, and seating himself in the trunk, he flew upon the roof of the castle, whence he crept through the window into the Princess's room.



She was lying asleep on the sofa, and she was so beautiful that the merchant's son could not resist kissing her, whereby she woke, greatly frightened. But he told her that he was the God of the Turks, who had come through the air to see her, which she liked very much.

Then he seated himself by her side and began to tell her stories. He told her that her eyes were like lovely deep lakes, where her thoughts flitted to and fro like charming mermaids; that her brow was like a snow-white mountain with the most splendid chambers within; and about the storks, which bring the little children.

Yes, they were indeed stories! And so he proposed to the Princess, who at once accepted him.











"You must return on Saturday," she said; "for then the King and Queen take tea with me. They will be very proud of my marrying the God of the Turks; but take care to have a nice story for them, for they are very fond of such. My mother likes them to be aristocratic and with a moral; but my father prefers something to laugh at."

"I shall bring you no other present than a story," he said; and so they parted, the Princess having given him a sword set with gold pieces, and these were of course useful.

He flew away, bought a new dressing-gown, and sat down in the forest to compose a new story; it had to be finished by Saturday, and that was no easy task.

When Saturday came it was ready, and the King and Queen, with the whole court, were waiting tea at the Princess's, where the suitor was received most politely.

"Will you oblige by telling us a story?" said the Queen, — "something instructive and profound."

"But still something to laugh at," said the King.

"Most certainly," he answered; "and now you shall hear something worth listening to."

"There was once a bundle of matches which were proud beyond measure by being of high birth. Their first ancestor — namely, the great fir-tree of which each one was a sprig — was an old tree in a northern forest. Now, the matches were lying on a shelf in the kitchen, between a tinder-box and an old iron pot, to whom they were telling about their youth.

" 'Yes; when we were up in the world we were really up,' they said. 'Every morning and night we had the finest tea, — it was the dew, — and all the day sunshine, when the sun shone, while all the little birds had to tell us stories. We knew too that we were rich; for while the other trees had green dresses during the summer only, we and our relatives could afford to wear a green dress winter as well as summer. But then the woodcutters came — it was the great revolution — and our family were separated. Our first ancestor became the mainmast of a splendid ship which could have sailed round the world; the branches went into other situations; and we have now the function of lighting up for the plebeian crowd; but that is the reason why we aristocrats are here.'

" 'Well, the case has been different with me,' said the iron pot, next to which the matches lay. 'From the first time I went into the world



I have been scrubbed and boiled. I see to the substantial part of the household, and I am, in fact, the most important in the house. My greatest joy is to lie on the shelf after dinner, clean and shining, and have a sensible talk with my companions. And if I except the pail, which sometimes goes into the yard, we all of us live secluded indoors. The only one who brings us any news is the market-basket; but he is so violent in his criticism of the Government and the people that the other day an old jar fell down and broke in sheer fright over it.

“ ‘He is a radical, you see.’

“ ‘You chatter too much,’ said the tinder-box; and the steel struck the flint so violently that it emitted sparks. ‘Now let us have a merry evening.’

“ ‘Yes; let us talk about who is of noblest birth,’ said the matches.

“ ‘Well, *I* don’t care to talk about myself,’ said an earthen jar; ‘let us have an evening’s entertainment. I will begin, and I will tell something which every one has experienced and which every one therefore understands, which is, of course, the best part of it.

“ ‘On the shores of the Baltic, among the Danish beeches —’

“ ‘What a delightful beginning!’ said the plates; ‘that is something we shall all like.’

“ ‘— There I spent my youth happily in a quiet family where the furniture was polished, the carpet swept, and clean white curtains hung up every fortnight.’

“ ‘You do indeed tell something interesting,’ said the broom. ‘One can hear at once that it is a lady who relates, there is something so clean and tidy in it all.’

“ ‘Yes, to be sure,’ chimed in the pail, making such a jump with delight that it came bang on the floor.

“ And the jar continued to relate, and the end was as good as the beginning.

“ All the plates rattled with delight, and the broom took some green parsley and crowned the jar with it; for the broom knew that if it crowned the jar to-day, the jar would crown it in turn to-morrow, and that would make the others angry.

“ ‘Now I am going to have a turn,’ said the tongs, and she danced. Oh, dear, how high she lifted one leg! Indeed, the old chair-cover in the corner split by looking at her. ‘Now crown me too,’ she said; and that she was.

“ ‘They are only a low-born lot,’ thought the matches.



"Then the tea-urn was asked to sing, but she excused herself by saying she had a cold; she could not sing without being hot. But that was only pride; she would only condescend to sing when on the table before her master and mistress.

"In the window lay an old quill which the servant was in the habit of writing with. There was nothing more remarkable about her than that she had been dipped too far into the inkstand; but of that *she* was proud.

"'If the tea-urn won't sing,' she said, 'she is quite welcome not to. Outside is a nightingale in a cage, who *can* sing. True, he has not much learning; but we won't refer to unpleasant things to-night.'

"'I think it is highly improper that a foreign bird like that should be listened to,' said the tea-kettle, who was kitchen-vocalist, and step-sister to the urn. 'Is that patriotism? I shall ask the market-basket.'

"'It disgusts me,' said the market-basket, indignantly; 'I am as disgusted as I well can be at the bare idea. Is this a proper manner in which to spend the evening? Would it not be more fun to turn the house topsy-turvy? Then everybody would be in his right place, and I should lead you all. That *would* be fun!'

"'Yes, let us have a regular row,' they all cried; but at the same moment the door opened and the servant entered, when all were immediately as quiet as mice. Still, each one was quite sensible of its qualities and position.

"'Had *I* only wanted,' each said, 'it would indeed have been a merry night.'

"The girl took the matches and lighted the fire. Oh, how they fizzed and sparkled!

"'Now,' they thought, 'it is not difficult to see that we are the highest born.' What a light! — and then they were gone."

"That was a *very* pretty story," said the Queen. "I quite imagined being in the kitchen with the matches. Yes, you shall have our daughter."

"Yes, certainly," said the King; "you shall have her, and that next Monday."

Thus the wedding-day was fixed, and the night before it the whole town was illuminated. Cakes and biscuits were thrown broadcast, and the boys stood on their toes to see, hurrahing and whistling. It was something grand indeed to look at.

"Well, I suppose I ought to do something too," thought the mer-



chant's son; and he bought a quantity of rockets, squibs, and all kinds of other fireworks, which he put into his trunk and flew up into the air.

What a cracking and whizzing! It made all the Turks jump so high into the air that their slippers flew about their ears. Such a display they had never witnessed. They saw at once that it was the God of the Turks who wanted to marry their Princess.



When the merchant's son reached the forest with his trunk he thought, "I should like to go into the town and hear what it looked like;" and that was but natural.

And what things he did hear!

Every one had something to say about it, and all agreed it was very beautiful.

"I saw the God himself," said one; "he had eyes like bright stars, and a beard like the foaming brook."

"He was enveloped in a mantle of fire," said another, "and little angels peeped from the folds."

Yes; he heard, indeed, some pretty things, and the next day he was to be married.

He now hurried back to the forest to rest in his trunk; but, oh! where was it?

It was burnt! A spark left in it had set it on fire, and the trunk was in ashes. He could no more reach his bride!

She sat by the balcony the whole day, waiting for him. She is waiting still, while he wanders homeless about the world telling stories; but they are not so good as the story about the matches.





ON the last house in a little village was a stork's nest. The stork-mother sat in the nest with her four young ones, which stretched out their heads with the little beaks still black, for they had not yet become red. A little farther off on the roof stood the stork-father, stiff and erect; he had drawn up one leg, so that might at all events be at ease while he stood sentinel. One might have thought he was carved in wood, so still he stood. "It looks, of course, grand for my wife to have a sentinel by the nest," he thought. "Nobody knows I am her husband, and I am sure they think I have been ordered to stand here. It looks imposing;" and he continued to stand on one leg.

Down in the street a number of children were at play; and when they saw the storks they began to sing an old rhyme about them:—

"Stork, stork, old father stork,  
Why do you stand there on one leg?  
Your wife has four uglies in her nest.  
One we will burn,  
Another we will flay,  
The third we will shoot,  
And the fourth we will slay."

"Listen to what the boys are singing," said the little storks; "they say we shall be burnt and flayed."

"Don't take any notice of what they say," said the stork-mother. "It means nothing."

But the boys continued to sing and point their fingers at the storks; only one, by name Peter, would not join in it, saying it was wicked to make fun of the good birds.

<sup>1</sup> In Denmark, the storks are looked upon by the peasantry with a certain amount of superstition and veneration, and their settling on the roof of a house as a "sign of luck." Children are also told that the storks bring the newly born babies.—TR.



The stork-mother consoled her young ones, repeating, "Don't take any notice of them; only look how calm your father stands, and that on one leg too."

"We are frightened," said the young storks, and drew their heads in.

The next day, when the children were again playing, they began again to sing, —

"One we will burn,  
And another we will flay."

"Shall we be flayed and burnt?" asked the young storks.

"Nonsense," said the stork-mother. "You shall learn to fly, and I'll teach you. We will fly into the meadows and visit the frogs, which bow before us in the water, singing, 'Quack, quack, quack!' and we will eat them. That will be fun indeed!"

"And what next?" asked the storks.

"Oh, afterward," said the mother, "all the storks in the land gather, in order to begin the autumn manœuvres, and then it is necessary to fly well; for he who cannot, the general kills with his beak. Look, therefore, that you learn something before they begin."

"Then we shall be killed after all, as the boys are singing!" the young ones cried.

"Listen to me, and not to them," said the mother; "when the great manœuvres are over, we fly to the warm lands, far, far away, across mountains and forests. We fly to Egypt, where there are triangular houses of stone rising in a point to the clouds; they are called pyramids, and are older than any stork can form an idea of. There is a river there which overflows its banks, and we walk in the mud eating frogs."

"Ah, how nice!" cried all the young ones.

"Yes, that it is," said the stork-mother. "We do nothing all the day but walk about eating; and when we are feasting there is not a leaf on any tree up here. Here it is so cold that the clouds break to pieces and fall down in little white flakes." It was the snow to which she referred, but she did not know how to explain it better.

"Do the wicked boys also break to pieces?" asked the young storks.

"Oh, not quite, but very nearly; and they have to sit moping indoors, while you may enjoy yourselves in a warm country where there are flowers and sunshine."

Some time after the storks were big enough to stand up in the nest and look round; and stork-father brought them every day such dainties.



as frogs and little worms. And how funny were his antics before them! He laid his head right back on his tail, while he made a noise with his beak like a rattle, and told them stories of the swamp.

"Now, listen to me!" said the stork-mother one day. "Now you must learn to fly;" and the four young ones had to get out on the roof. Oh, how they flapped their wings and tried to balance themselves; still they were very near falling down.

"Now, look at me," said the mother. "This is the way to hold your head, and you put your legs thus. One, two! One, two! That is what will help you on in the world." And she flew a little way, and the young ones made an awkward jump, when plump, down they went, for they were too heavy.

"I won't fly," said the youngest, and crept back into the nest. "I don't care to go to the warm lands."

"Do you prefer then to stay here when winter comes, and the boys to burn you? I am going to call them."

"No, no; don't!" it cried, and jumped back upon the roof.

On the third day they could really fly a little, and so they thought they could rest in the air; they tried it, but plump, they went down, and they had again to use their wings.

Then the boys in the street began again to sing: —

"The third we will shoot,  
The fourth we will slay."

"May we fly down and peck out their eyes?" asked the young ones.

"No, leave them alone," said the mother. "Just pay attention to me, that is far more important. One, two, three; now wheel to the right. One, two, three; to the left round the chimney-stack. That was well done. Your last turn was so well done, that to-morrow you shall be allowed to come with me out into the swamp. Several charming stork families come thither with their children. Now, let me see you behave yourselves and keep your heads high, for that looks well and aristocratic."

"But cannot we revenge ourselves on those wicked boys?" asked the young storks.

"Let them cry as much as they like," said the mother; "you will fly towards the clouds and reach the warm countries all the same, while they will freeze and not have a green leaf or an apple."



"But we intend to be revenged," they whispered to each other; and so there was more exercise.

Of the boys in the street, he who had begun to jeer at the storks was the worst, though he was only some six years old; but the young storks thought he was at least a hundred, for he was bigger than either of their parents, and of course they knew nothing of the age and size of men and children. Their whole revenge should fall upon that urchin, for he had begun the annoyance, and kept it up still. The young storks were greatly incensed, and the bigger they grew the less they would



stand it. At last the mother had to promise them revenge; but it was only to be carried out on the last day they were in the country.

"We shall first see how you behave yourselves at the manœuvre," said the mother. "If you come off badly, the general will plunge his beak into your breast, and then the boys will be right in what they say, — at all events to some extent. But now let us see."

"You shall be satisfied," the young storks said, and they exerted themselves to the utmost. They trained every day, and at last flew so lightly that it was a pleasure to see them.

Now the autumn came, and all the storks gathered to fly to the warm



lands, while there was winter in the North. That was something like a manœuvre! They had to fly across towns and forests in order to test their strength, for it was a long way they had to fly when migrating. The young storks acquitted themselves of their task so well that they "gained honors," with a frog and a worm too. That was the highest award, and the latter they were allowed to eat.

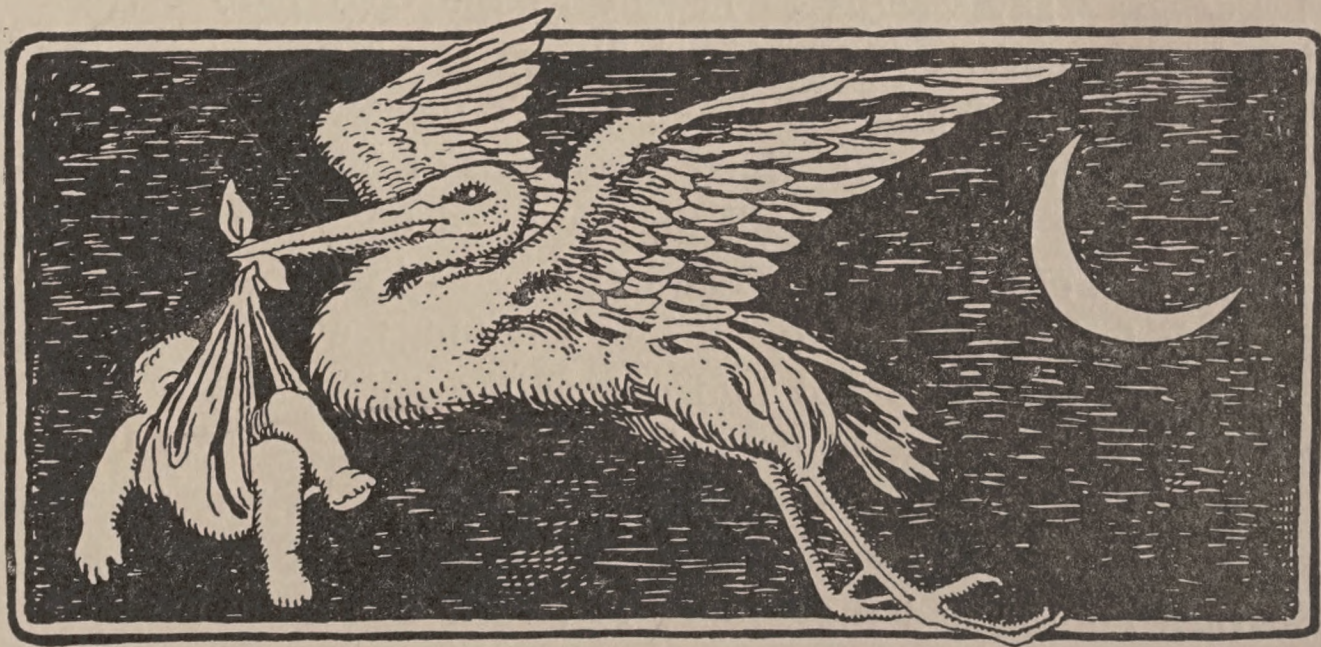
"Now we will revenge ourselves," they said.

"Yes," said the stork-mother, "and I have hit upon the right plan. I know where the lake is in which all little children lie till they are fetched by the stork for their father and mother. The little ones sleep and dream there as they never will do again. Every father and mother wishes for such a baby, and all children wish for such a little brother or sister. Now we will fly to the lake and fetch a baby for each of the children who has not made fun of us; but those who have, shall not have any at all."

"But he who *began* the singing, — that nasty, wicked boy, what shall we do to him?" cried the young storks.

"In the lake lies a little dead child, who died in a dream," said the mother; "that we will bring to him, and then he will cry at having a dead little brother. But the good boy, — you have not forgotten him, I am sure? — he who said it was cruel to make fun of us, we will give a sister as well as a brother; and as the name of that boy is Peter, you shall all be called Peter."

And as she said, so it happened; and for that reason the stork is called Peter to this very day.







IN the city of Florence, not far from the Piazza del Granduca, runs a little cross-street which is called, I believe, Porta Rossa. Here lies, in front of a kind of bazaar where fruit is sold, a splendid chisled pig, cast in bronze.

The fresh crystal water gushes from the mouth of the animal, which from age is dark green in color. The snout alone shines as if it had been polished, which, in fact, it has by the numerous children and beggars who grasp it with their hands when drinking from it. It is quite a picture to see the well-shaped animal embraced by some pretty, half-naked boy as he puts his rosy lips to the spout.

Every visitor to Florence will easily find the spot; he need only ask the first chance beggar for the Bronze Pig.

It was late one winter's night. The mountains were covered with snow, but the moon was up, and moonlight in Italy gives as good a light as on a dark winter's night in the North; yes, better, in fact, for the clear blue air here elevates the mind, whereas in the North the cold steel-gray sky weighs as heavily as the cold hard earth which shall some day cover one's mortal shell.

Away in the garden of the Grand Duke's palace, below the cover of the cypress, where even in winter thousands of flowers bloom, a little ragged boy had been sitting all the day, — a boy who might be the personification of Italy, smiling, and still so destitute. He was hungry and thirsty, for nobody had given him anything; and when it became dark the gate-keeper turned him out, as the garden was to be closed. For a long while he stood dreaming on the bridge across the Arno, looking at the images of the stars sparkling in the water below the splendid bridge.

He then approached the Bronze Pig, knelt down, put his little arms around its broad neck and his tiny mouth to the animal's shining snout,



and drank deep draughts of the refreshing fluid. Close by lay a couple of lettuce-leaves and some chestnuts ; these were his supper. Not a single person could be seen in the street; and being quite alone, he leaned up against the neck of the animal, resting his curly little head against that of the Pig, and in a few moments he was asleep.

The clock in the cathedral struck solemnly the midnight hour, and lo! the Pig was alive. The boy heard it say quite plainly, "Hold on, my little boy, for I am off;" and away it ran. It was a run indeed!

First they reached the Piazza del Granduca, and the bronze horse carrying the statue of the Grand Duke neighed loudly. The dazzling escutcheon on the old Town Hall shone like transparent pictures, and Michael Angelo's David swung his sling. There was indeed life! The bronze groups representing Perseus and "The Rape of the Sabines" were quite too real; for a cry of despair burst from them across the grand, silent square.

Next, the Bronze Pig halted at the Palazzo degli Uffizi, in the colonnade, where the nobility gather for the carnival.

"Hold on," said the animal; "for now we run upstairs."

The little one did not say a word, for, though trembling a little, he felt so happy.

They entered a long gallery; he knew it well from former visits. On the walls hung paintings, and around stood statues and busts, all in the loveliest light, as if it were noonday. But the splendor seen when the door of a chamber at the end was opened far surpassed this. That sight the boy never forgot.

Here stood the statue of a woman, — a form as lovely as only Nature and the hand of the greatest master of the marble could mould. She moved her beautiful limbs; dolphins sprang at her feet, and immortality shone in her eyes. The world calls her the Medicean Venus.

On each side of her stood magnificent marble statues of men; one was sharpening a sword: he is called the Whetter. The Wrestler





Gladiators, the other group is called. The sword is sharpened, and the gladiators wrestle for the Goddess of Beauty.

The boy was dazzled with all the splendor; the walls shone with colors, and in everything was life and motion. But all the statues did not move from their places, for the glory from the heads of the Madonna, Christ, and St. John bound them. The holy figures were no longer paintings; they were the holy persons themselves.

What light and splendor in every hall! And the little boy saw it all, for the Bronze Pig took him into every one. But one painting in particular fixed itself in his mind, principally through the happy children in it. He had once nodded to them in daylight. It represents Christ descending to Hell, by Angelo Bronzino, and the expression of confidence in the faces of the children of reaching heaven is the chief beauty of the work. Two little ones embrace each other, and a third holds his hand out to another without, and points to himself as if to say, "I am going to heaven."

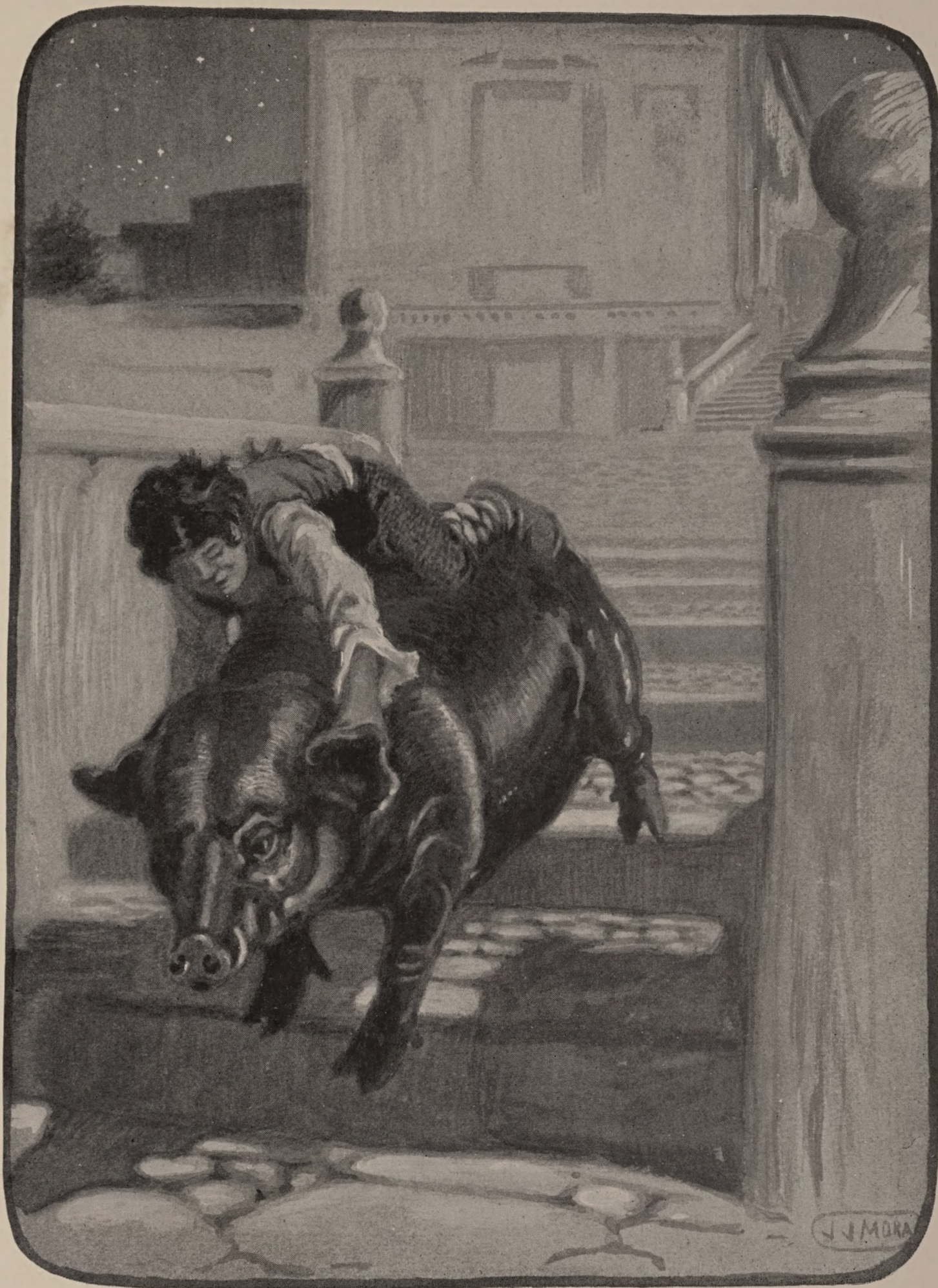
The boy looked longer at that painting than at any other, and the Bronze Pig, too, remained immovable before it. A faint sigh was heard. Did it come from the painting, or the animal? The boy held out his hand toward the smiling children, but the Bronze Pig ran away with him through the open antechamber.

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and may God bless you for what you have let me see, dear animal!" said the boy, stroking it as it went thump! thump! down the stairs with him.

"The same to you," answered the Bronze Pig. "I have helped you, and you have helped me, for only with an innocent child on my back have I the power to move. You see I even dare to come under the rays of the lamp before the image of the Madonna. I may carry you everywhere except into the church; but if outside it, I may look in through the door. You must not, however, get down, for if you do I assume the form I have in the day at Porta Rossa."

"I shall not leave you, dear animal," said the little boy, who was at that moment being carried at a swift pace through the streets to the church Santa Croce. The great double portals flew open, and the light from the altar fell upon the deserted square. A strange glimmer streamed from a monument over a grave in one of the left side-aisles, thousands of stars forming like a glory around it. An escutcheon ornamented the grave, — a red ladder on blue ground, looking as if on fire. It was Galilei's grave. It is a simple monument, but the red ladder on











the blue ground is a very striking escutcheon, for it is the symbol of Art itself, along which Genius ascends to heaven.

In the right side-aisles every monument on the costly sarcophagi seemed to have become animated. Here stood Michael Angelo, there Dante with the laurel-wreath round his head, and Alfieri and Macchiavelli: side by side rest all these great sons of Italy.<sup>1</sup>

The church is a splendid one, and far more beautiful than the marble cathedral, though not so large.

The marble garments seemed to move as the great statues looked towards the altar, where white-clad boys swung golden censers, the fragrance from which streamed from the church into the square without.

The boy held forth his hand toward the splendid light, when at the same moment the Bronze Pig ran off with him. He held on to it with all his might, feeling the wind whistle in his ears. He thought he heard the portals of the church scrape on their hinges as they were closed, but in the same instant he felt losing his consciousness, an icy chill shook him, and he awoke.

It was morning, and he was leaning against the Bronze Pig at Porta Rossa, which looked just as usual.

Fear and terror filled his heart at the thought of her whom he called *mother*, who had yesterday sent him out to gain some money. He had none. He was hungry and thirsty, but still he embraced and kissed the Bronze Pig once more, nodded again to it, and then turned into a lane so narrow that a loaded donkey could hardly have passed along it. A great, iron-shod door stood ajar; here he went up a stone staircase, with dirty walls, and a rope for banister, till he reached an open gallery where clothes were drying. From here, steps led down into the courtyard, past the well from which the inhabitants of the house drew their water by means of iron chains, pail dangling by pail in the air, while the chains rattled and spilt the water into the yard.<sup>2</sup> One more stone staircase he scaled, when he encountered a woman, about middle age, with thick, black hair.

"What have you brought home?" she asked sternly.

<sup>1</sup> Michael Angelo's grave is just opposite Galilei's. On the monument is his bust and three figures, — Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture. Close by is that of Dante, though the body lies at Ravenna. On the monument is seen Italy pointing to the statue of Dante, and Poetry weeping. A little farther off are the graves of Alfieri and Macchiavelli.

<sup>2</sup> I have deemed it right to leave out a passage here. — TR.



"Please don't be angry," the boy pleaded; "I could not get anything, absolutely nothing," and he caught his mother's skirt as if wishing to kiss it. They then entered a wretched room, on the floor of which stood an earthen jar with charcoal in it, a so-called *marito*, which she took on her arms and warmed her hands by.

"I am sure you got something," she said to the boy, knocking him with her elbow.

The boy began to cry, and she kicked him so that he shrieked.

"If you don't be quiet," she said, "I will knock your brains out with the jar," at the same time swinging it in the air so menacingly that the boy threw himself on the floor with a piercing cry. Just then a neighbor entered, also with a *marito* on her arm.

"Felicita," said the latter, "what are you doing to the child?"

"The child is mine," said the other, roughly. "I can kill it if I like, and you too, Gianina; mind that;" and she swung the jar threateningly. The other woman held up hers for protection, and smash! went the jars, the bits, fire, and ashes being strewn over the room. But the boy had fled out of the room, across the courtyard, and out of the house.

The poor little boy ran till he lost his breath, when he happened to be at the church of Santa Croce, by the door of which he had stood the night before, and he entered.

It was fully lit up, and he knelt by the first grave on the right, that of Michael Angelo, and sobbed aloud. People came and went, mass was said, but nobody took any notice of the boy, except an elderly man who stood for a while looking at him and then went away.

Hunger and thirst tortured the poor little boy so that he nearly fainted, and he crept into a corner between the wall and the monument, where he went to sleep.

It was evening when he awoke by somebody shaking him. He rose quickly, and the elderly man stood before him.

"Are you ill? Where do you live? Have you been here all the day?" he asked. The questions being truthfully answered, the man led him to a little house in a by-street close at hand. They entered a glove workshop where his wife was busy sewing, while a little white Bolognese poodle was playing before her on the table, which rushed toward the boy.

"The two innocents know each other," said the wife, patting them both. The boy was then given food and drink by the kind people, and they told him he might remain with them for the night. The next



day Master Guiseppe would speak with his mother. He was given a plain little bed, but it was a royal one compared with lying on the hard stone floor at home, and he slept soundly and dreamt of the Bronze Pig.

The next morning Master Guiseppe went out, and that made the little boy very unhappy, for he knew he went to his mother to take him back; and he wept, and kissed the little dog. But the wife nodded to them both.

And what news did Master Guiseppe bring home? He spoke long with his wife, and she nodded, and patted the boy. "It is a nice boy," she said. "He may become as good a glove-maker as you are, and his hands are soft and pliant. Madonna has destined him for a glove-maker."

And the boy remained in the house, the wife herself teaching him to sew. He picked up and became happy, and began to tease Bellissima, as the little dog was called; but that made his mistress very angry, and the boy was very sorry for what he had done. Thoughtful he sat in his little chamber which looked on to the street, for he could not sleep. The Bronze Pig was in his thoughts, and suddenly he heard a noise outside, "Clauck! clauk!" "It must be the Bronze Pig," he thought, rushing to the window. But there was nothing down there.

"Help the signore to carry his paint-case," said his mistress the next morning, when a neighbor, a young painter, came out carrying a case and a large roll of canvas. The boy took the box and followed the painter, who proceeding to the picture-gallery went up the staircase the boy knew so well from the night he had run up the same on the Bronze Pig. He recognized the statues, the lovely Venus, and the splendid paintings.

Now they stood before Bronzino's painting of Christ and the little laughing children, and the boy laughed too, for he was with them in heaven.

"Well, now you had better go home," said the painter, as the boy had waited to see him raise his easel.

"May I look at your painting?" said the boy. "May I be allowed to see how you transfer the painting to that piece of white stuff?"

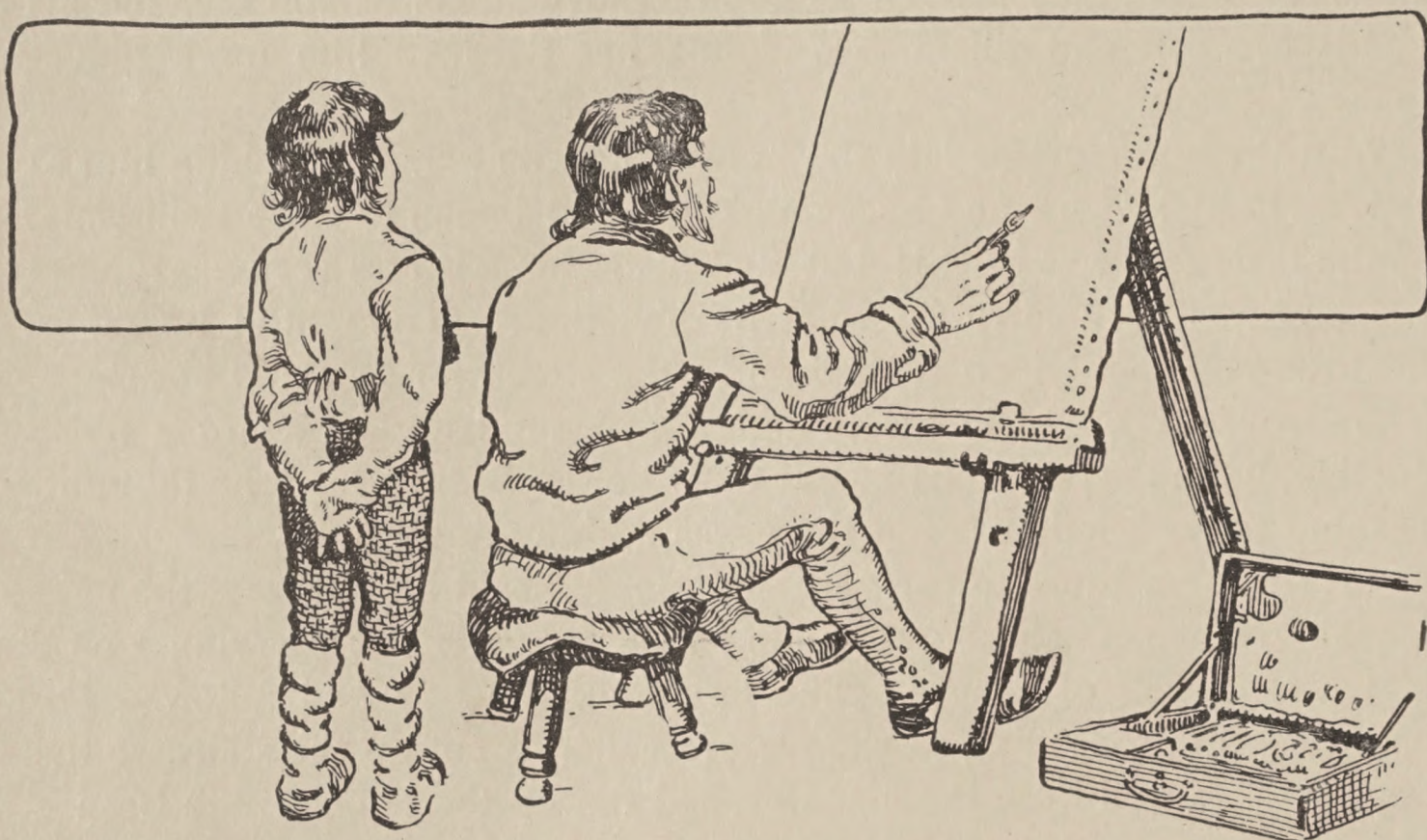
"I am not going to paint now," said the artist, opening his box of chalks. His hand travelled rapidly, while his eye rested on the great painting, and though the touches were faint, Christ was soon depicted on the canvas.



"But now you must be off," said the painter; and the boy went quietly home and took his place on the table, learning to sew gloves.

But all the day his thoughts were in the picture-gallery, and therefore he pricked his fingers and was very awkward; but he did not tease Bellissima. At night, the door being still open, he stole out. It was a cold but starlight night, so lovely and bright. He wandered through the streets, already quiet and deserted, and soon afterwards he stood before the Bronze Pig. He bent over it and kissed its shining snout.

"You dear animal," he said; "how I have been longing after you! To-night we must have a ride."



But the Bronze Pig did not stir, and the fresh water gushed from its mouth. Then, just as the little boy had seated himself on its back, he felt something tugging at his trousers; he looked down and beheld — Bellissima! The dog had stolen after him without being noticed, and he barked as if saying, "Don't you see me? What do you sit there for?" No fierce dragon could have frightened the boy more than the dog in that place. Bellissima in the streets, and without being "dressed," as his mistress called it. What would it end in? Bellissima never went out in the winter without wearing a little sheepskin coat, which had been made for him. It was tied with a red ribbon round the neck, and had a rosette and a bell. The dog looked almost like a little lamb when dressed thus for a walk with the signora. Bellissima



there without being dressed! All the boy's illusions were gone; but still he kissed the Bronze Pig, and took the dog, which trembled with cold, on his arms, and ran off for home as fast as he could.

"What are you running off with?" two policemen called out; and the dog began to bark. "Where have you stolen that pretty dog?" and they took it away from him.

"Oh, do give him back to me!" pleaded the boy.

"If you have n't stolen him, tell them at home that they can have him back at the station," they said, and walked off.

What terrible fear and despair! The boy did not know whether to throw himself in the Arno or go home and confess all. "They are sure to kill me," he thought. "But I should like to die, for then I should go to Jesus and the Madonna." And then he went home; but mostly because he wished to die.

The door was closed, and he could not reach the knocker. There was not a soul in the street; but a stone lying near, he began to knock with it.

"Who is that?" somebody asked within.

"It is I," he said. "Bellissima is lost. Open the door and kill me!"

The anxiety for Bellissima became very great, particularly on the part of the mistress of the house, who, looking on the wall, saw the sheepskin hang there.

"Bellissima at the station!" she called out. "You naughty boy! How did you get her out? She is sure to freeze to death. Fancy the delicate creature among the rough men!" Her husband had to go out. His wife cried with the boy, and all the people in the house, including the painter, appeared on the scene. He took the boy between his knees, and questioning him, gathered all about the Bronze Pig and the picture-gallery, though it was not easy to understand. The artist soothed the boy, and tried to put a kind word in for him with his mistress; but she was not pacified till her husband brought the dog. Now there was joy, and the artist patted the boy on the head and gave him a number of drawings.

What a collection! There were comical heads among others, but, what was the finest of all, the Bronze Pig itself. Could anything be better? There it was in a few touches, and even the house behind it.

"Oh, if I could only draw and paint," sighed the boy; "then I should possess all the world."

The next day, when he was alone, he seized a pencil and attempted



to copy the Bronze Pig; and he succeeded. It was certainly a little awkward and a little out of proportion, but still one could see what it was meant to represent, and the boy was delighted with the result. The pencil would at first not travel so well; but the following day there stood a second Bronze Pig by the side of the first, and it was a great deal better; and the third he drew was so good that everybody could see what it was meant to represent.

But he was slow in learning to sew gloves, and the errands in the city took very long, for the Bronze Pig had taught him that all pictures might be transferred to paper; and Florence is a huge picture-book to those who take the trouble to look at it.



On the Piazza della Trinitá stands a column on the top of which the Goddess of Justice is placed, blindfolded, and with the scales and the sword. Soon she stood on the paper, and it was the glove-maker's little boy who had drawn it.

The collection of drawings increased, but still all in it were dead things, when one day Bellissima jumped before the boy. "Be quiet," he said, "and you shall come among my drawings." But the dog would not stand still, so he tied it on to a chair by its head and tail. The dog began to snarl and struggle, and in the same instant the signora entered.

"You wicked boy!" she cried in great rage, striking him at the



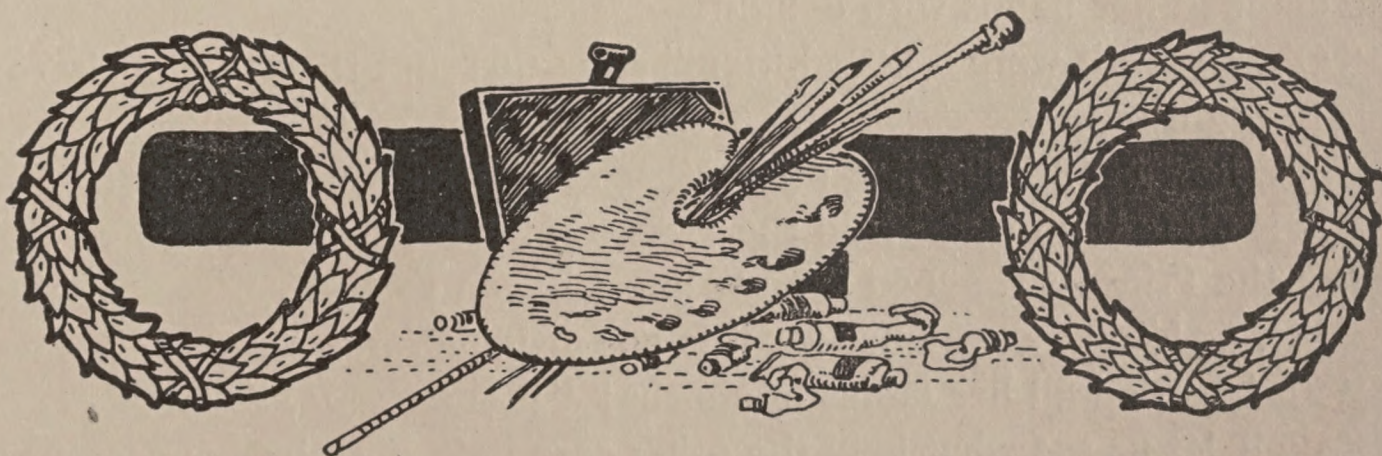
same time. "Out of the house with you at once! You are a nasty ungrateful wretch!" and she kissed her little dog.

As the boy was on the point of going, the artist came upstairs — and here was the turning-point in the boy's career.

In the year 1834 there was an exhibition of paintings in the *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno* in Florence, at which two paintings, hanging side by side, attracted immense attention. On the smallest was seen a lively little boy, who was in the act of drawing a little white poodle, which was tied on to a chair by its head and tail. There was a life and truthfulness in the painting which captivated everybody. The artist was, it was stated, a young Florentine who had been found in the street as a boy, and who, on being brought up as a glove-maker, had taught himself to draw. A now famous painter had discovered the boy's talent just as he was on the point of being dismissed because he had tied up the signora's pet dog to serve as his model.

The glove-maker's apprentice had become a great painter, — that, this picture alone testified; but the one next to it more so. It represented only a single figure; namely, a pretty, ragged boy lying asleep, leaning against the Bronze Pig in the street *Porta Rossa*. Every one knew the spot. The child's arms encircled the animal's head, and he was sleeping peacefully, while the lamp at the image of the Madonna threw a strong light on his pale, beautiful face. It was a grand painting, and mounted in a fine gilt frame, on the corner of which hung a wreath of laurels; but between the leaves fluttered a black ribbon, and a long black veil descended therefrom.

The young artist had the same day gone to his heavenly rest.







THERE was once a poor Prince who had a kingdom which certainly was very small, but still large enough to get married on, and married he wanted to be.

It was indeed bold of him to say to the Emperor's daughter, "Will you marry me?" But he dared to do so, for he was known far and wide, and there were hundreds of princesses who would have jumped at the offer. But don't think *she* did.

Well, now we shall hear.

On the grave of the Prince's father grew a rose-tree; oh, such a lovely rose-tree! but it only bloomed once in five years, and then it bore only one flower. That flower smelt, however, so sweet that anybody who smelt it forgot at once all his troubles. He had also a nightingale which could sing the most beautiful airs, and the rose and the bird were presented to the Princess in two big silver cases.

The Emperor had them carried into a room where the Princess was playing with her ladies-in-waiting at giving "at homes," for they had nothing else to do; and when she saw the big cases with the presents, she clapped her hands with delight.

"Oh, I wish it were a little kitten," she said; but then the lovely rose was brought out.

"Ah, how beautifully it is made!" exclaimed the court ladies.

"It is more than that," said the Emperor; "it is neat."

But the Princess touched it and almost began to cry.

"Fie, pa!" she exclaimed; "it is not artificial, it is *natural*!"

"Fie!" cried all her ladies in chorus; "it is *natural*!"

"Well, let us see what is in the other case before we lose our temper," said the Emperor; and the nightingale was brought out. It sang so beautifully that it was impossible to say anything against it at first.



"*Superb ! charmante !*" ejaculated the ladies ; for of course they all spoke French, one worse than another.

"How the bird reminds me of the deeply lamented Empress's musical box," said an old courtier. "Ay, it is the same tone, the same execution."

"It is, it is indeed," said the old Emperor, with tears in his eyes.

"I believe it is not natural," said the Princess.

"Oh, yes, it is," replied those who had brought it.

"Well, let it fly," said the Princess ; and she would have nothing whatever to do with the Prince.

But he was not disheartened. He rubbed his face with dirt, put on old clothes, pressed his hat over his eyes, and went to the palace of the Emperor.

"How do you do, Emperor?" he said. "Can I get some situation here?"

"Well," replied the Emperor, "we have many applicants here ; but all the same I want somebody to look after the pigs, for I have a good many of them."

And so the Prince was made Imperial Swine-herd. He was given a wretched little room close to the pigsty, where he had to live. But he sat working the whole day, and in the evening he had made a little saucepan, with bells all around the brim, and when it boiled, the bells began to play the well-known old song, —

"Oh, my little darling,  
I love you !"

But the strangest part of it was that anybody putting his finger into it could smell the dinner that was being cooked in every kitchen in the whole town ; so that was really something better than the rose.

Then the Princess came along with her ladies, and when she heard the song she stopped, being much pleased, for she too could play "Oh, my little darling." It was the only thing she knew ; and that she could only play with one finger.

"Why, it is the song *I* play," she said. "He must be an educated swine-herd. Look here ! Just go and ask him what the instrument costs."

And one of the ladies had to go into the mire ; but she put pattens over her shoes.

"What do you want for that saucepan?" she asked.

"I want ten kisses from the Princess," answered the Swine-herd.



"Lor!" exclaimed the lady.

"Well, I won't take less," said the Swine-herd.

"What does he ask?" inquired the Princess.

"I don't dare to say it," said the lady; "it is so awful."

"Well, you can *whisper* it to me," replied the Princess; and so the lady whispered.

"He must be mad," exclaimed the Princess, and walked quickly away.



But when she had gone a little distance the bells began again to play, —

"Oh, my little darling,  
I love you!"

"Look here," said the Princess, "ask him if he won't take ten kisses from my ladies."

"No, thank you," replied the Swine-herd; "ten kisses from the Princess, or I keep my saucepan."

"How very annoying!" exclaimed the Princess. "Well, you will have to stand around me, so that nobody shall see it."

And the ladies placed themselves around her, and the Swine-herd received the ten kisses, and the Princess the saucepan.

Oh, what joy there was now! Night and day the saucepan had to boil; and in the whole town there was n't a kitchen in which they did not know what was being cooked, from the courtiers down to the lowest.



"We know who is going to have tripe and onions," they exclaimed, "and who is going to have mutton cutlets. Oh, how interesting!"

"Very interesting indeed," rejoined the old mistress of the ceremonies.

"But take care you hold your tongues," said the Princess; "for remember, I am the Emperor's daughter."

"Oh, dear, yes!" exclaimed the court ladies.

The Swine-herd, that is, the Prince, — but of course they did not know he was anything but a common Swine-herd, — spent the day in making a rattle, which, when it was turned, played all the waltzes, galops, and polkas composed since the world was created.

"It is really *superb*," said the Princess, as she passed. "I never heard a prettier composition. Look here! go and ask him what he wants for the instrument; but I will not be kissed."

"He wants a hundred kisses from the Princess," replied the lady who had inquired.

"He must be mad," said the Princess, walking away.

But when she had gone some distance she paused and said, "I must encourage art; I am the Emperor's daughter. Tell him he shall have the same number as yesterday; the rest he can take from my ladies."

"But we don't care about it," they answered.

"Nonsense!" said the Princess; "if I kiss him, you can. Remember, I pay and feed you." And the lady had to proceed to the Swine-herd again.

"A hundred kisses, or each keeps his own," was the reply.

"Stand around me," said the Princess; and so the kissing began.

"What does that crowd down by the pigsty mean?" said the Emperor to himself, standing on the balcony; and he rubbed his eyes and put on his spectacles. "I am sure it is the ladies-in-waiting who are up to some joke; I must go and see what it is;" and he drew his slippers up at the heels, for they were trodden down.

How fast he ran!

As soon as he got into the yard he walked very quietly, and the ladies had so much to do with counting the kisses that they did not notice him. He raised himself on tiptoe.

"What in the world is this?" he exclaimed, when he saw the kissing; and in the next moment he struck the Swine-herd on the head with his slipper, just as he was receiving the eighty-sixth kiss.



"Out with you both!" he exclaimed, for he was very angry. And so the Princess and Swine-herd were turned out of the empire.



There she now stood, crying; and then it began to rain.

"Oh, poor wretch that I am!" exclaimed the Princess; "if I had only taken the handsome Prince! I am so unhappy!"



Then the Swine-herd went behind a tree, washed the dirt off his face, threw away his shabby clothes, and went before her in his princely garments, looking very handsome.

"I have learned to despise you," he said. "You refused an honest Prince, and you did not appreciate the rose and the nightingale, but the common Swine-herd you kissed for a plaything. Now you must lie on the bed you have made for yourself."

And then he went into his kingdom and locked the gate, while the Princess was left outside with her saucepan and rattle.













IN China, as you know, the Emperor is a Chinese, and all those about him Chinese. It is now many years ago, but that is just the reason why the story is worth hearing before it is lost. The Emperor's palace was the most magnificent in the world, entirely made of the finest porcelain, and it was so delicate that one had really to be careful when touching it. In the park were rarest flowers, and to the most gorgeous, silver bells were attached, which rang, so that nobody should pass without noting them. Everything was carefully arranged in the Emperor's park, and it was so great that the gardener did not know how far it extended; for if one continued to walk in it one entered the most beautiful forest, with tall trees and deep lakes. The forest reached right down to the deep and blue sea, and great ships could float close into it. Here in the woods lived a Nightingale which sang so beautifully that even the poor fisherman, who had his work to attend to, lay listening at night. "Oh, how sweetly it sings!" he exclaimed.

From all the countries in the world people came to the Emperor's city, who admired the same, the palace and the park; but when they heard the Nightingale they all said, "That is the most wonderful."

And when the travellers came home, many a book was written about the city, the palace, and the park, and nobody forgot the Nightingale. It was praised the most; and those who could write sonnets wrote the most beautiful in its honor.

The books went all over the world, and some at last reached the Emperor. He was sitting in a chair of gold, reading and reading, and every moment he nodded his head; for he liked to read the flattering accounts of the city, the palace, and the park. "But the Nightingale is the most wonderful of all," it said.

"What is this?" he exclaimed. "The Nightingale! I don't know it. Does such a bird exist in my empire, and that in my own park



too? I never heard of it before. It is the sort of thing one learns by reading."

And he called one of his courtiers, who was so noble that when anybody who was below him in rank ventured to speak to him, he only answered by putting his tongue out.

"It is stated to be a most remarkable bird, here called a Nightingale," said the Emperor. "It is said to be the most wonderful thing in my whole empire. Why has n't somebody told me about it before?"

"I never heard of the thing," replied the courtier; "it has never been presented at Court."

"I desire it to come and sing for me to-night;" said the Emperor; "the whole world seems to know what I possess, except myself."

"I have never heard of the Nightingale," repeated the courtier; "but I will find him, most certainly."

But where? The courtier ran up and down stairs, and through all the chambers and passages of the palace, but nobody whom he met had heard of the Nightingale, and said that no doubt it was all fiction, what was written about it.

"I beg your Imperial Majesty not to believe what the book says; it is all fiction, if not sorcery."

"But the book in which I have read it has been sent to me by the great Emperor of Japan, therefore it must be true. I command the Nightingale to be here to-night. If not, the whole Court will be drummed on their stomachs after supper."

"Tsing-pa!" exclaimed the courtier, and ran up and down stairs, and through all the chambers and passages of the palace again, followed by half the Court, for they did not like being drummed on their stomachs. There was an incessant inquiry for the wonderful Nightingale, which all the world knew, but nobody at Court.

At last they found a little girl in the kitchen who said, "Dear me, my lord, the Nightingale! I know it, and how lovely it sings! I am allowed to carry some remnants from the table every night to my mother, who lives by the sea, and when I return, and being tired rest in the forest, I hear it singing. My eyes become filled with tears thereby; I feel as if my mother kisses me."

"Little kitchen-maid," said the courtier, "I will get you a situation as under-cook, and let you see the Emperor eat, if you will show us the Nightingale, for it has been ordered to Court to-night."



And so they all set out for the forest where the Nightingale used to sing. After a little while they heard the lowing of a cow.

"Ah," said the courtier, "here it is! There is, indeed, great strength in such a small animal. I am sure I have heard it before."

"No, my lord, that is a cow lowing," said the kitchen-maid. "We are still far from the place."

Then they heard the croaking of frogs.

"Magnificent," said the Court chaplain; "I hear it. It is like church-bells."

"No, that is the frogs," said the girl; "but now we shall soon hear him."

Now the Nightingale began to sing.



"That's it," said the kitchen-maid. "Listen! And there it sits," she added, pointing to a little bird on a bough.

"Is it possible?" said the courtier. "I never thought he was like that. How common it looks! Surely it must have lost all its color at the sight of so many grand people."

"Little Nightingale," cried the kitchen-maid, "our gracious Emperor wishes so much that you should sing before him."

"I will do so with great pleasure," replied the Nightingale; and it sang so sweetly that everybody was charmed.

"It is like glass bells," said the courtier. "Just look how the little throat works; it is remarkable that we have never heard of it before. It is sure to be a success at Court."



"Shall I sing once more for the Emperor?" asked the Nightingale, believing that the Emperor was present.

"Charming little Nightingale!" said the courtier, "I have the pleasure of informing you that the Emperor commands your presence at Court to-night, in order to delight him with your lovely voice."

"It sounds best in the woods," said the Nightingale; but still it followed them, as the Emperor wished it.

The palace was like a fairy castle. Walls and roofs, which were all of porcelain, sparkled in the light of thousands of golden lamps, while the choicest flowers which could sing were ranged in the corridors.

In the middle of the great hall, where the Emperor sat, a tree of gold was raised, on which the Nightingale was to sit. The whole Court was present, and the little kitchen-maid was allowed to stand behind the door, as she was now promoted. Everybody was in Court dress, and everybody looked at the little gray bird to which the Emperor was nodding. Then the Nightingale sang so charmingly that tears rose to the eyes of the Emperor and even rolled down his cheeks. And the Nightingale sang sweeter still, so lovely that the Emperor's heart was touched; which made him so delighted that he offered it his gold slipper to wear round its neck; but the Nightingale declined the offer with thanks, for it was already more than satisfied.

"I have seen tears in the eyes of the Emperor," it said; "that is enough for me. An Emperor's tear is worth the finest gem. I am fully repaid;" and it sang again more beautifully than before.

"It is the dearest flirtation I have known," said the ladies; and they took water in their mouths to cluck when anybody spoke to them, and tried to think that they too were nightingales. Ay, even the servants deigned to remark that they were pleased; and that was the greatest compliment, for they are the most difficult to please. Yes, the Nightingale was indeed a success.

The bird had to remain at Court, had its own cage, and could walk out twice a day and once a night. It had twelve attendants, who all held a silk ribbon attached to its legs, so there wasn't much enjoyment in the walks.

The whole town talked about the wonderful bird; and when two persons met each other, one said, "Nightin," and the other only, "gale;" and so they understood each other. Ay, eleven little boys were even named after it, though not a single one of them could sing a note.



One day the Emperor received a big parcel, outside which was written, "Nightingale."

"Here is a new book about our bird," said the Emperor. But it was no book. It was a work of art in a box; namely, an artificial nightingale, which was like the real one, only it was covered with precious stones. As soon as it was wound up it sang one of the melodies of the real bird, while its tail bobbed up and down glittering with silver and gold. Round its neck hung a ribbon, on which was written, "The Emperor of Japan's nightingale is poor compared with the Emperor of China's."

"It is *charmante*," they all cried; and he who had brought the artificial bird was at once created Imperial Grand Master of the Nightingale.

"Now they must sing together," said the Emperor; but it did not go well, for the real Nightingale sang in its natural way, and the artificial one could not keep time.

Then the artificial bird sang alone, which it did as well as the real one; and in addition it glittered like bracelets and rings, which, of course, was more delightful to look at.

Thirty-three times it sang the same song without being tired, and some wanted it to sing it again; but the Emperor thought that now the real Nightingale ought to sing. But where was it? Nobody had noticed it flying away through the open window to its green woods.

"What does that mean?" said the Emperor. And the courtiers thought it was very ungrateful of the bird. "But we have the best left," they said; and so the artificial Nightingale had to sing again, and everybody praised it far more than the real one.

"You see, your Majesty," said a courtier, "with the real bird one never knows what is to come, but here everything is arranged. That comes and nothing else. It can be explained; we may even rip it open and show how one waltz follows another."

"That is just my opinion, too," cried the rest of the Court. Then the Emperor ordered the bird to sing before the people on the Sunday following, and they were as delighted as if they had taken too much tea, for that is really Chinese; and they all held up one finger, nodded their heads, and said "Ah!" But the poor fishermen who had heard the real Nightingale said that the artificial one sang well in its way, but that it lacked something, they could not say what.

The real Nightingale was next banished from the empire.

The artificial Nightingale was placed on a silk cushion by the



Emperor's bed, and around were laid all its presents of precious stones. It was given the title of "Imperial Bedroom Songster," with the rank of Number One on the left side; for the Emperor considered that side the most aristocratic, because it was the side of the heart, — for the heart is on the left side even with an Emperor.

The Court Composer wrote five-and-twenty volumes about the bird, so lengthy and so learned, with the most difficult Chinese words. And those who read them said it was all very clear; for if they had not, they would of course have been declared fools and been drummed on the stomach.

Thus a year passed. The Emperor, the Court, and all the people knew every note in the artificial Nightingale's song; but that was just why they liked it, for then they could all sing as well. The boys in the street sang, "Zizi-zi! clunck! clunck! clunck!" as well as the Emperor himself. Ay, it was quite charming!

But one night as the Emperor was lying in bed listening to the bird's song, something went "Bang!" inside it; there was a crack and whir-r-r-r! all the wheels spun round — and all was silent.

The Emperor at once jumped out of bed and called his body-physician; but what could he do? Then a watchmaker was called, and after much talking and examining he succeeded in repairing it somehow; but it had to be used carefully, as the springs were worn out and could not be replaced, if it should sing at all. There was great grief everywhere, and only once a-year the bird was allowed to sing; and that was quite enough. The Court Composer made a speech with all the strange words in it, saying that it was as good as before; and so everybody said the same.

Five years had elapsed, when there was a great grief in the country; for the Emperor was ill and could not live, and he was much beloved by his subjects. A new Emperor had already been proclaimed, and people stood outside the palace asking the courtiers how the Emperor was.

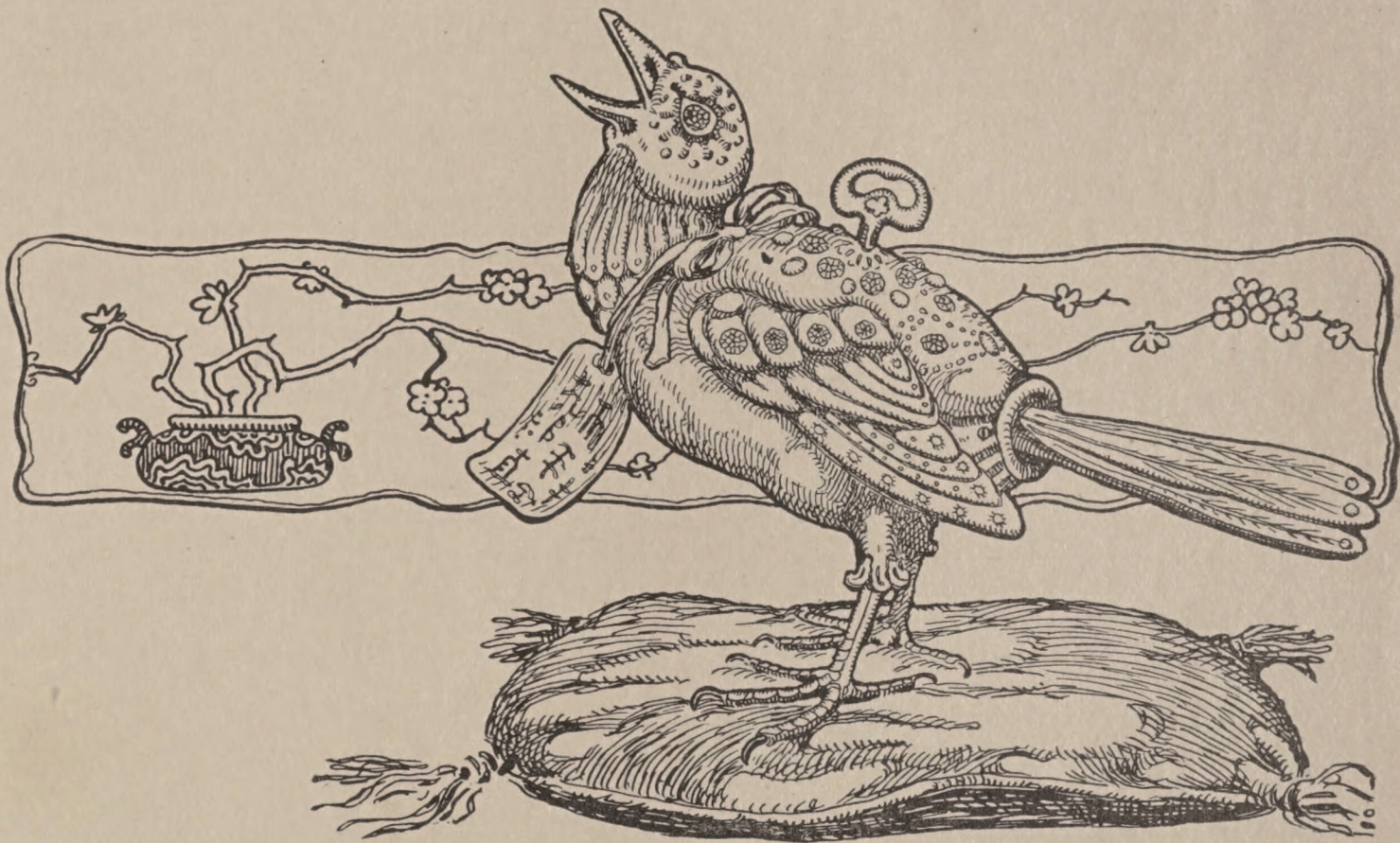
"T! T!" they said, and shook their heads.

The Emperor lay cold and pale in his great splendid bed, and the Court, believing him dead, hurried out to do homage to the new Emperor. The attendants ran out to talk about the matter, and the ladies-in-waiting had a great tea-party. In every room and corridor carpets had been laid down, and therefore not a single sound was heard anywhere. But the Emperor was not yet dead. Calm and pale he lay in



his magnificent bed with long silk curtains and heavy gold tassels, while the moon shone upon him from a window high up on the wall, as well as on the artificial Nightingale.

The poor Emperor could hardly breathe; he felt as if somebody was sitting on his chest; and opening his eyes he beheld Death sitting on the bed, with the Emperor's crown on his head, his sword in his hand, and the imperial standard over his shoulder. And all around strange heads peeped through the folds of the bed-curtains, some of whom



were horrible to look at, and others pleasant. They were the Emperor's good and bad deeds who looked at him, while Death weighed on his chest.

"Do you remember me?" said one. "Do you remember me?" added another. And they told him of his bad deeds till a cold perspiration gathered on his forehead.

"I don't know anything about it!" cried the Emperor. "For heaven's sake, music, music! — the great Chinese drum! only stifle what they are saying!"

But they continued, and Death nodded his head at what they were relating, like a true Chinese.

"Music! music!" cried the Emperor again in agony. "Dear little gold-bird, sing! only sing! I have given you gold and precious stones;



I have with my own hands hung my gold slipper round your neck. Sing, only sing!"

But the bird remained silent; there was nobody to wind it up, and otherwise it could not sing. And Death continued to stare at the Emperor with his hollow eyes, while the silence around was quite terrible.

In that moment a lovely song was heard close to the window; it was the little living Nightingale sitting without. It had heard about the Emperor's illness, and had come to comfort and encourage him. And as it sang, the horrible phantom became fainter and fainter, while the blood in the Emperor's body coursed quicker and quicker, and even Death listened, and said encouragingly, "Go on, little Nightingale! go on!"

"I will if you will give me the golden sword, if you will give me that standard, if you will give me the Emperor's crown," responded the bird.

And Death gave every one for a song; while the Nightingale sang about the peaceful graveyard, where the white roses bloom, where the honeysuckle scents the air, and where the green grass is moistened by the tears of mourners, so that Death began to long so much for his garden that he swept out of the window like a cold white mist.

"Thank you, thank you, little divine bird!" cried the Emperor; "I know you. Although I banished you from my domains, you have driven the horrible phantoms from my bed and Death from my heart. How can I repay you?"

"I am fully rewarded," replied the Nightingale; "I drew tears from your eyes the first time I sang to you; that I shall never forget. Those are jewels which the heart of a songster prizes above all others; but now you must sleep, and become well and strong. In the mean time I will sing to you."

When the morning sun shone in on him through the window, the Emperor awoke quite restored; but none of his attendants had as yet returned, for they believed he was dead; and the Nightingale was still singing.

"You must always remain with me," said the Emperor; "you shall only sing when you like, and the artificial Nightingale I will destroy."

"No, don't do that," answered the Nightingale. "It did what it could do; keep it. I cannot live at the palace, but let me come when I like. I will come at night, and sit outside your window and sing to you, so that you may be delighted as well as reflective. I will sing of those



who are happy and those who are suffering, of the good and bad hidden around you. The little songster flies far and wide, to the poor fisherman and the honest peasant. I will come and tell you all; but I love your heart better than your crown, though the crown has a halo around it. But you must promise me one thing — ”

“Everything!” cried the Emperor, as he stood in his imperial robes in which he had dressed himself, holding the heavy gold sword to his heart.

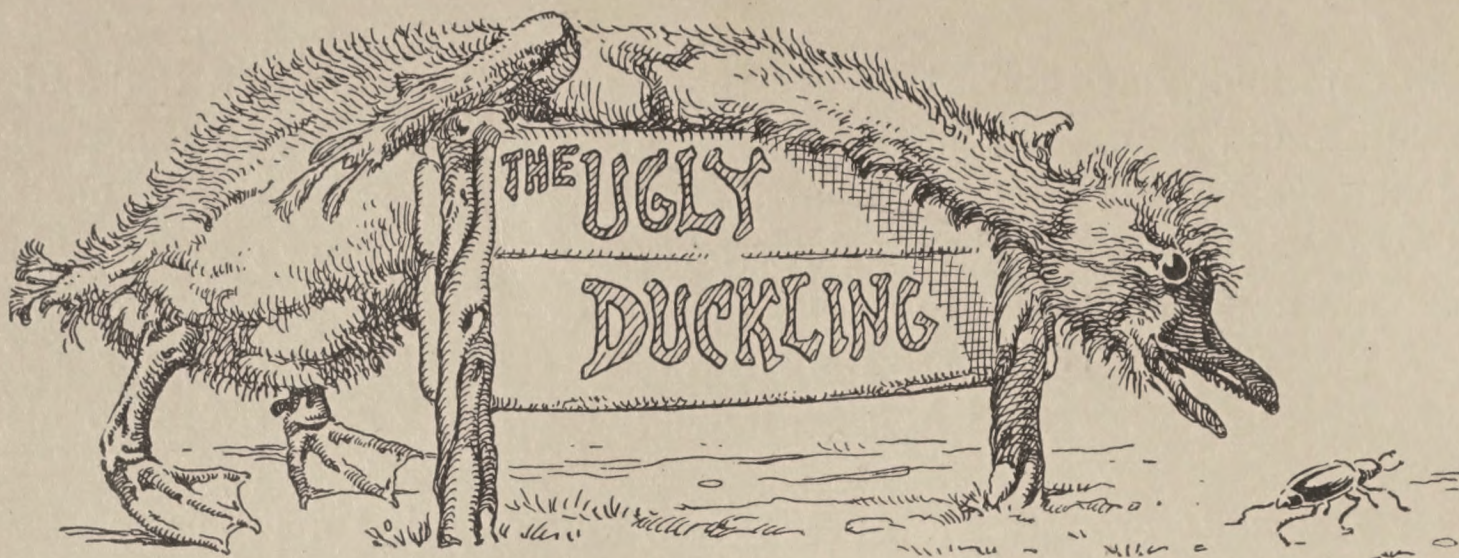
“You must promise me never to tell anybody that a little songster tells you everything.”

And so the Nightingale flew away.

Then the attendants entered to look at their deceased Emperor. Yes, there they stood amazed; and the Emperor said, “Good-morning.”







THE country was so lovely: it was summer. The corn was ripe and yellow, the oats green, and the hay piled on ricks in the green fields, where the stork strutted about on his long red legs, chattering Egyptian; for that language his mother had taught him. Round the fields and meadows were great forests with deep lakes; ay, it was lovely in the country. In the middle of the sunshine stood an old manor-house with deep moats around it; and from its walls down to the water grew great burdock-plants, so high that little children might stand upright under them. It was as wild there as in the thickest forests, and here a duck lay on her eggs. She had to hatch her young; but now she was nearly tired of it, for it had lasted so long, and she received few visitors. The other ducks preferred to swim about in the moat to sitting under the burdock-leaves chatting with her.

At last one egg after another cracked, saying, "Peep! peep!" and the little ducklings put forth their heads.

"Quack! quack!" said the mother; and the little ones ran about under the green leaves. "Green is good for the eyes," said the mother.

"How great the world is!" said the little ducklings; for now they had more room than in the eggs.

"Do you think this is the whole world?" asked the mother. "It reaches right away on the other side of the garden into the fields of the parson, but there I have never been. Are you all here? No, the biggest egg is still there. How long is it going to last? I am really tired of it." And she sat down again.

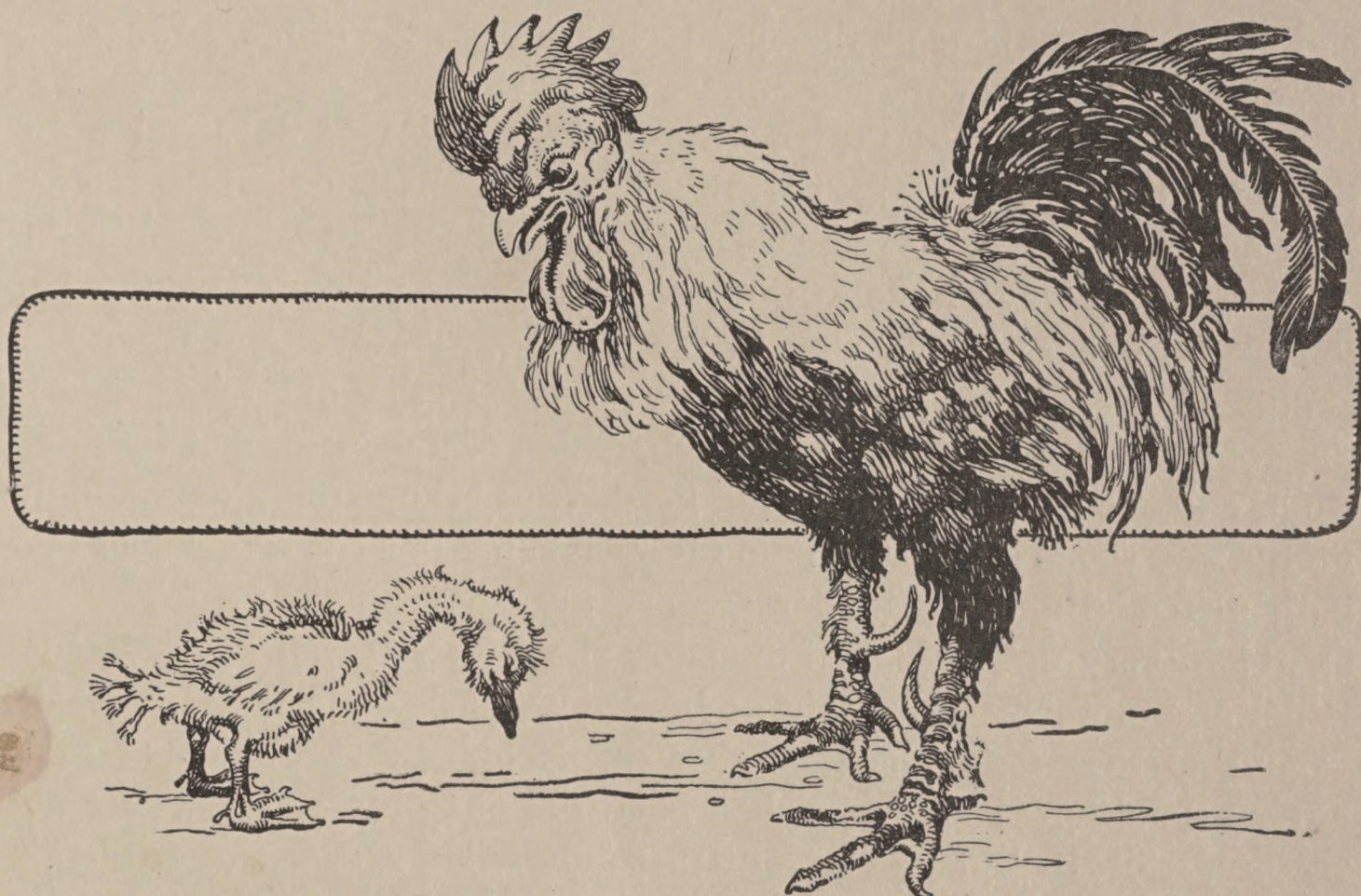
"Well, how are you getting on?" inquired an old duck who came to pay a visit.

"This egg takes such an awful long time," replied the duck. "It won't crack. But now you shall see the others; they are the prettiest



little things *I* ever saw. They are all like their father; the wretch! he does n't come to see me."

"Let me see the egg which won't crack," said the old duck. "You may be sure it is a turkey's egg. I was tricked in that way once, and I had grief enough with the young ones, for they are afraid of water. I could n't get them into it; I quacked and quacked, but it was no use. Let me see it. I thought so — it is a turkey's egg. You leave it, and teach the others to swim."



"I may as well sit a little longer," said the duck. "Now I have sat so long, I may as well do the rest."

"Please yourself," responded the old duck, tartly, and went away.

At last the big egg cracked. "Peep! peep!" said the youngster, and wobbled out. He was so big and ugly that the duck stared at him.

"What an awful size!" she exclaimed. "None of the others looks like him. He cannot be a duckling. Well, we shall soon see. Into the water he goes, if I have to kick him in."<sup>1</sup>

The next day was very fine, the sun shining warmly on the burdock-leaves, and the duck-mother walked down to the moat with her whole

<sup>1</sup> Has since become a well-known Scandinavian proverb. — TR.



family. Splash! she went into the water, saying, "Quack! quack!" and one duckling after another jumped in. The water went over their heads; but they soon came up again, and floated so beautifully. Their legs worked of themselves, and all were in the water, even the ugly gray one.

"He is no turkey," said the duck-mother to herself. "Only see how well he uses his legs, and how straight he keeps himself! He is my own darling; really, when one looks closely at him he is quite handsome. Quack! quack! Now, follow me, and I will take you into the world and present you in the poultry-yard; but keep close to me, so that nobody tramples upon you, and beware of the cat."

And so they entered the poultry-yard. There was an awful noise there, for two families were fighting over an eel's head, which the cat took after all.

"That's the way of the world," said the duck-mother, smacking her tongue, for she too would have liked the head. "Move your legs," she continued. "Make haste and bow your heads to that old duck. She is the noblest of us all; she is Spanish, which accounts for her being so stout, and she has a red rag round her leg; it is something exceedingly pretty, and the greatest distinction a duck can attain; it is given so that both men and animals shall recognize her. Now make haste! Legs apart! Every well-regulated duckling keeps its legs well apart, like its father and mother. That's right; bow your heads and say 'Quack!'"

And so they did; but the other ducks looked at them and said, "What a nuisance! Now we shall have that gang too, as if we were not enough before! But just look at that ugly fellow! We won't tolerate *him*!" And at once a duck ran up and bit him in the neck.

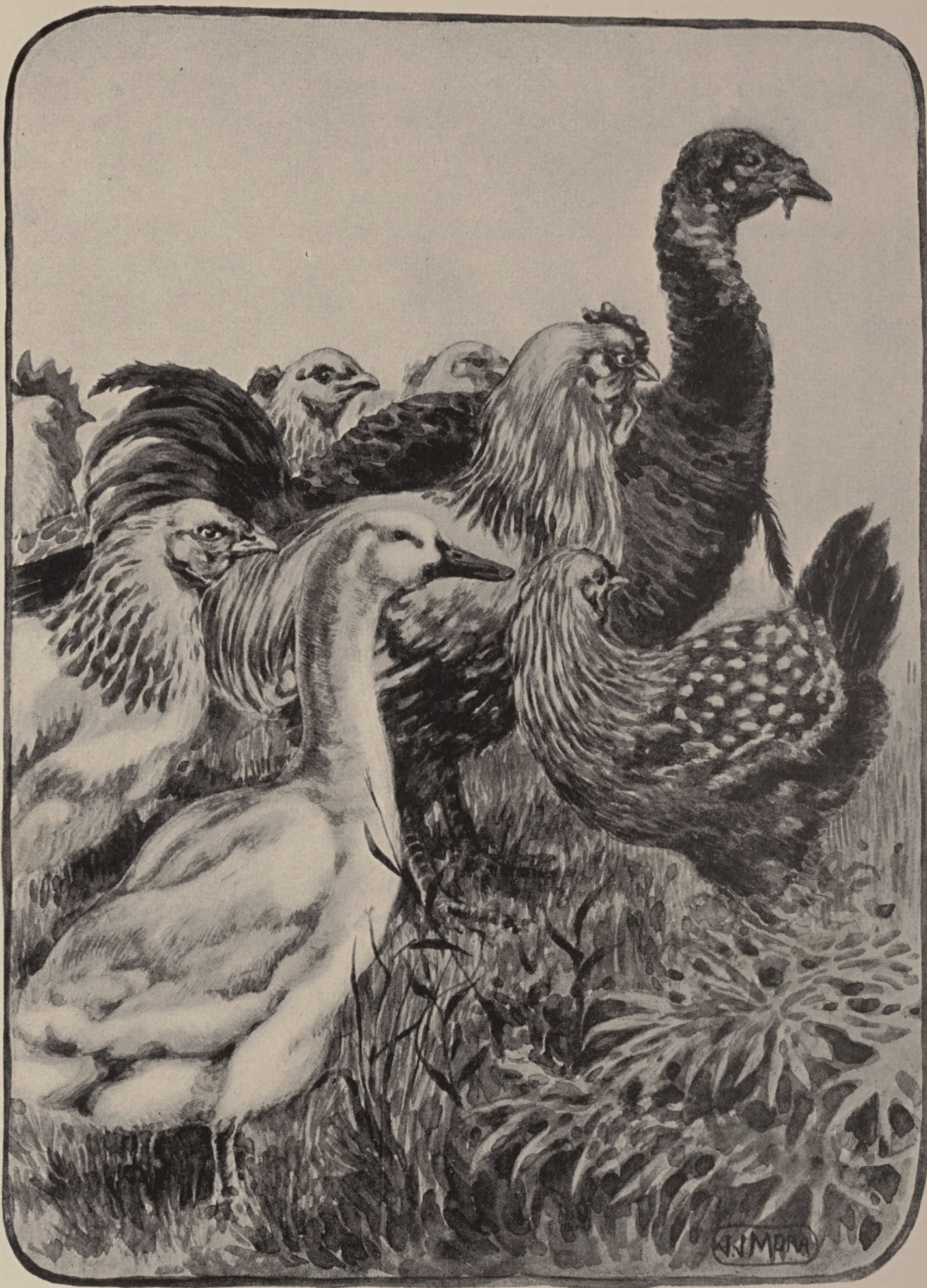
"Leave him alone!" cried the mother. "He doesn't do anybody any harm."

"But he is too big and awkward," said the duck who had bitten him, "therefore he shall be pecked."

"Your children are pretty children, mother," remarked the duck with the red rag round her leg. "They are all very pretty except that one. It is a failure. I wish you could mend it."

"It is impossible, your Grace," replied the duck-mother. "He is not handsome, but is a good child, and he swims, if possible, better than the others. I hope he may grow prettier. He has been too long in the egg, therefore he has not the right shape." And then she plucked him in the neck and smartened him up. "He is, besides,











a duck-peasant," muttered the duck-mother, "so it is no matter. He is strong enough, and will make his way in the world, I am sure."

"The other children are very pretty," repeated the old duck. "Now, make yourselves at home, and if you find an eel's head you may bring it to me."

And so they began to feel at home.

But the poor Duckling who was so ugly was bitten, kicked, and pinched by the ducks as well as the hens. "He is too big," they all said; and the turkey-cock, who was born with spurs, and therefore believed he was an emperor, blew himself up, and advanced against the terrified Duckling like a ship with all sail set, and clucked till he was red in the head. The poor little Duckling did not know where to turn or twist; he was so sad at being so ugly, and the cause of fun for the whole poultry-yard.

Thus the first day passed, and every day things became worse and worse. The poor Duckling was chased everywhere; even his own brothers and sisters were very unkind to him, and said, "If only the cat would take you!" And his mother said, "I wish you were anywhere else but here." And so the ducks kicked him, and the hens pinched him, and even the girl who fed them struck him.

At last he flew in despair over the palings of the yard, and the little birds in the woods without flew up in terror. "That is because I am so ugly," he said, closing his eyes, but still kept on running. At night he reached the brood where the wild ducks lived, and here he lay all the night tired and sorrowful at heart.

In the morning the ducks flew up, and saw their new companion. "Who are you?" they asked; and the Ugly Duckling turned and twisted, nodding to everybody as well as he was able.

"You are awfully ugly," they said; "but it does n't matter to us, as long as you don't marry any one of our family."

Poor Duckling! he thought but little of marriage. He only asked to be left in peace, and to be allowed to lie in the reeds and sip muddy water.

There he lay two whole days, when two wild geese arrived, or rather ganders, which being very young, were very cocky.

"Look here, comrade," they said. "You are so ugly that it is quite a treat to look at you. Will you come with us and become migratory? Close by is another brood, where there are a lot of fine geese, all maidens, who say 'Quack!' You have a chance of being successful there, being so ugly."



Bang! bang! a gun then sounded overhead, and at the same moment both the wild geese fell dead in the reeds, and the water was colored red. Bang! bang! it sounded again, and a lot more geese flew up. Shot followed upon shot; there was a great party of sportsmen lying around the lake, some even sitting in trees firing. The blue smoke from the guns hung like clouds between the dark trees and over the water, while the dogs came right into the mud,—splash! splash! swaying the reeds on all sides. The poor Duckling was greatly terrified, and turned his head to get it under his wing, just as a big dog came upon him. Its tongue hung out of its mouth, and its eyes shone savagely. It reached its mouth close down to the Duckling and showed its sharp teeth — and went away.

“Thank Heaven!” said the Duckling, “I am too ugly to be bitten even by a dog.”

And he lay very quiet while shot followed upon shot.

It was late in the day when all became still, and for many hours afterwards the Duckling did not stir. At last he hurried away as fast as his legs would carry him, across fields and meadows, while the wind blew so fiercely as nearly to arrest him.

Towards evening he reached a little poor peasant's hut so wretched that it did not know to what side to fall, and therefore it remained standing. The wind blew so fiercely that the poor Duckling had to sit down on his tail in order not to be carried away, and the storm grew worse and worse. Just then he discovered that the latch was off the door, and that he could creep into the room; and so he did.

An old woman lived here with a cat and a hen; and the cat, which was called Tommy, could arch his back, purr, and even sparkle when his back was stroked. The hen had little short legs, and was therefore called Chicken Short Leg. She laid her eggs regularly, and the woman loved her like her own child.

In the morning the Duckling was discovered, and the cat began to purr and the hen to cackle.

“What is that?” said the old woman; but not seeing well, she believed that the Duckling was a fine fat duck which had strayed. “That's a good catch!” she exclaimed; “now I may get duck's eggs. I only hope it is not a gander; but we will try that.”

And so the Duckling was tried for three weeks, but no eggs came. The cat was master in the house, and the hen mistress, and they always said, “We and the world;” for they thought they formed the best part



of it. The Duckling thought there might be a difference of opinion, and *that* the hen could not bear.

“Can you lay eggs?” she asked.

“No,” was the reply.

“Well, then, hold your tongue, I think.”

And the cat said, “Can you arch your back and spin?”

“No, I cannot,” was the reply.

“Well, then, you ought not to have an opinion when sensible people talk,” retorted the cat.



And the Duckling sat in a corner and was very sad. Then he began to think of the fresh air and the warm sunshine, and a strange longing came over him to float on the water, and at last he could not help telling the hen.

“What is the matter with you?” said the hen. “You have nothing to do; that’s why you have such strange ideas. Lay eggs or spin, and they will soon pass off.”

“But it is so lovely to float on the water,” remonstrated the Duckling; “it’s so lovely to have your head under water and dive!”

“No doubt it is very nice!” said the hen. “You must be mad, I think. Just ask the cat—for he is the cleverest *I* know—whether he likes floating on the water and diving. Just ask our mistress herself;



she is the most learned in the world. Do you think she desires to float on the water, and put her head under?"

"You don't understand me," said the Duckling, quietly.

"Well, if we don't, who is to? You don't think you know better than the cat and the old woman, leaving me out of consideration, do you? Don't give yourself airs, my child, and thank Providence you have been treated so well. Aren't you in a warm room, and in company from which you might learn something? But you are a fool, and I tell you so. You may believe me, because I tell you the truth, though unpleasant; that is the way to tell your true friends. Now, try to learn to lay eggs, spin, and sparkle; that's my advice."

"I believe I will go into the world," said the Duckling after a while.

"Yes, do!" replied the hen.

And the Duckling went, floated on the water, and dived; but every animal despised him because he was so ugly.

Then autumn came, the leaves turned yellow and brown, and the wind whirled them into the air, which seemed clear and cold. The clouds were heavy with snow and hail, and on the fences the raven sat crying, "Aj! aj!" with cold. One might shudder at the thought of the cold, and the poor little Duckling suffered terribly.

One evening, just as the sun set so beautifully, a flock of great lovely birds came out of the underwood. The Duckling had never before seen such splendid birds, for they were snow-white, with long slender necks. They were swans. They emitted a peculiar sound, spread out their great wings, and flew away from the cold land to the warm regions. They rose so high, so high, that the little Duckling felt a strange sensation at the heart; and he wheeled round in the water, stretched his neck into the air, and emitted a plaintive cry so loud and so strange that he was quite frightened himself. Oh, how he thought of the lovely birds, the happy birds! and when he was no longer able to see them he dived to the bottom, and when he arose he was almost frantic. He did not know either the name of the birds or whither they flew; but still he loved them better than any he had seen before. He did not envy them, however. How could it occur to *him* to wish for such beauty,—he who would have been contented with being allowed to remain among the ducks, the poor, ugly animal!

And the winter was very, very cold; so cold that the Duckling had to keep on moving in the water to keep it from closing; but every night the hole became smaller. The water froze so that the ice crackled, and



the Duckling had to keep on moving its legs; at last he was too exhausted to do so any longer, and he lay quiet till he froze fast in the ice.

Early in the morning a peasant came along, who, seeing the Duckling, went out and broke the ice with his wooden shoe, and carried it home to his wife, where it revived.



The children wanted to play with the Duckling; but believing they were going to hurt him, he flew in terror right into a pail of milk and upset it on the floor; when the woman, crying and striking her hands, terrified him so that he next flew into a barrel of fat and then into a barrel of flour. What a sight he now presented! The woman cried, and ran after him with a pair of tongs; while the children, laughing and yelling, upset each other in their attempt to catch him. It was lucky the door was open, so the Duckling flew out through it and into the underwood in the new snow, where he lay as dead.

It would be too heart-rending to relate what the poor Duckling suffered during that long winter. Suffice it to say that when spring came, and the larks began again to sing, he lay in the fen, in the warm sunshine.

Then, all of a sudden, he lifted his wings; they were stronger than



before, and whirred loudly, and before he quite knew it he was in a park where the apple-trees stood in bloom, the lilacs scented the air, and where green trees bordered a lake. Oh, how lovely and spring-like it was there! And then three beautiful, snow-white swans came out of the grass and went into the water. They floated so lightly; and the Duckling knew they were the same he had seen before, and he felt a strange sadness at heart.

"I will fly up to those royal birds," thought the Duckling, "and if they should kill me because I am so ugly, so much the better. Rather die through them than to be pinched by the ducks, hacked by the hens, kicked by the poultry-girl, and freeze in the winter." And so he flew into the water and swam towards the birds, which on seeing him puffed out their feathers and approached him.

"I ask only to die," said the poor bird, bowing its head to the water and expecting death. But what did he behold in the crystal liquid? He saw himself; but he was no longer a lanky gray bird, the Ugly Duckling, but — a magnificent, snow-white swan!

It makes no difference being hatched among ducks when one only is a swan by birth.

Now he was quite pleased at the suffering he had endured, because for the first time he could value his present happiness.

And the other swans swam about him, stroking him with their beaks.

Then some little children entered the park and threw bread to the swans, and the youngest cried, "There is a new one!" And the other children shouted with delight, "Yes, there is a new one!" They clapped their hands, and called their parents, who threw cake to the new swan; and they all cried, "The new one is the loveliest!" It was so young and handsome that the other swans bowed their heads before him.

Then the Swan felt so bashful that he put his head under his wing. He was happy, but not proud; for a good heart is never proud. He thought of how he had been persecuted and ridiculed, and now everybody was saying how handsome he was, — the handsomest of all. And the lilacs stretched their fragrant blossoms towards him, and the sun shone so beautifully that the bird puffed out his feathers, bowed his slender neck, and from his heart broke in rapturous delight the exclamation, "So much happiness I never dreamt of while I was the Ugly Duckling!"





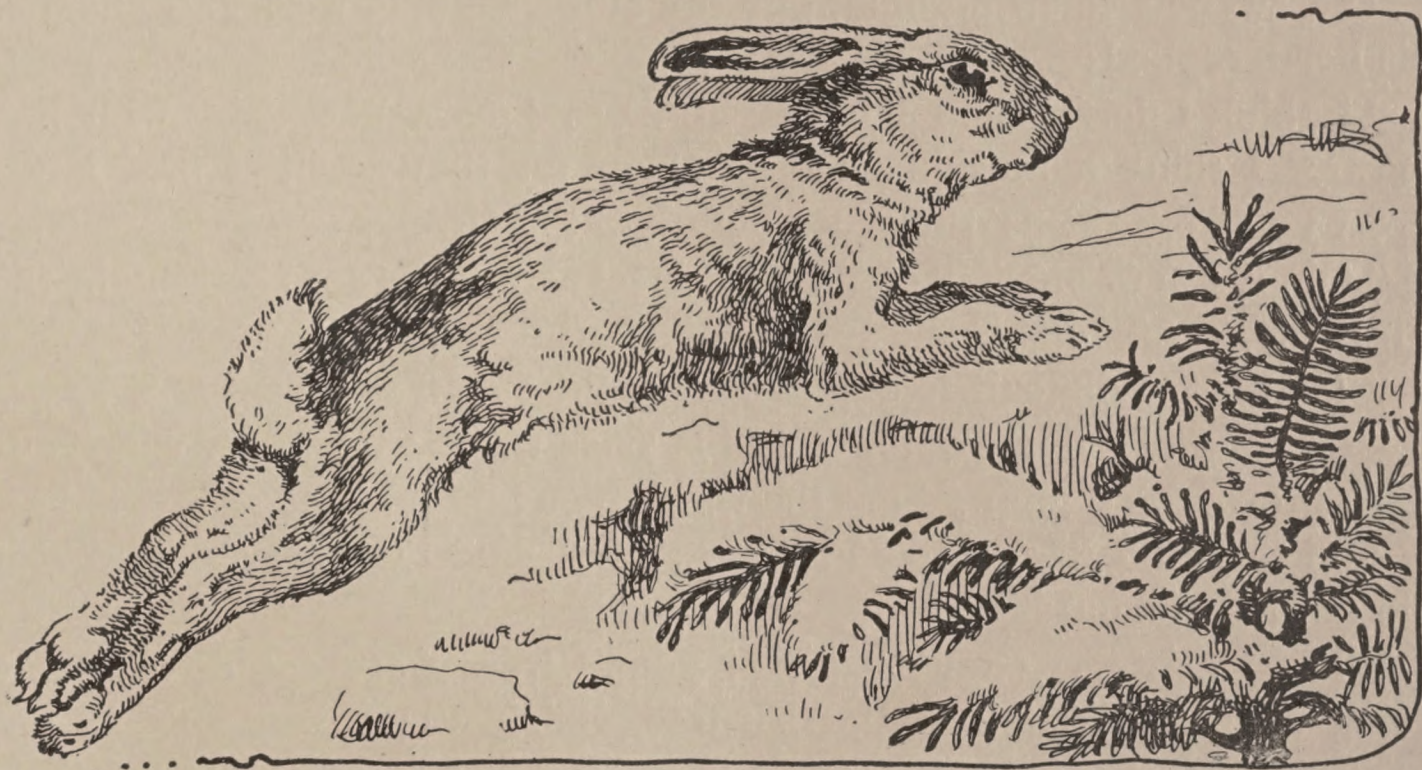








FAR out in the forest stood a pretty little Fir-tree. It stood in a favored spot, had plenty of air and sun, and around it grew a number of tall comrades, firs as well as pines. But the little Fir-tree was so anxious to grow that it did not take any notice of the sun and the air, or of the little peasant children gathering berries. Often they came with



their baskets and seated themselves by the Tree, saying, "How small and pretty it is!" That was what the Tree could not endure to hear.

The following year it had grown a bit higher, and the next a good deal more, but the little Tree sighed, "Oh, if I were only as tall as the others! Then I could spread out my branches, and with the top see far into the world. The birds might build in my crown, and when it blew, I could nod as haughtily as other trees."

It had no enjoyment from the sunshine, the birds, and the red clouds sailing above.



In the winter, and when the snow lay all around glistening white, a hare would often come running, and jump right across the Fir-tree. Oh, how annoyed it was then!

But two winters passed, and then the hare had to go round the Tree. "Oh! to grow, to grow! that is the only thing worth living for in this world," sighed the Tree.

In the autumn some wood-cutters came and felled some of the biggest trees. The same took place every year, and the young Fir-tree trembled thereat, for the big trees fell crashing to the earth. The branches were hewn off, and they looked quite bare and naked, being almost unrecognizable. Then they were put on carts, and drawn out of the forest. "Whither do they go? What is their fate?" thought the Fir-tree.

In the spring when the swallow and the stork arrived, the Fir-tree said to them, "Can you tell me whither they go? Have you seen them?"

The swallow knew nothing, but the stork, looking wise and shaking his head, replied: —

"I think I do. When I left Egypt, I saw many new ships with fine masts. I think it must have been them, for they smelt of fir. I can greet you from them; they rose high into the air."

"Oh, if I were only tall enough to travel across the sea!" thought the Fir-tree. "But what is the sea like?"

"That is too difficult to explain," said the stork, and went away.

"Be happy in your youth," said the sun's rays; "be happy with your fresh growth, and your young life within you!"

And the wind kissed the Fir-tree, and the dew wept over it; but it did not understand it.

When Christmas came, a lot of young trees were cut down, some being not even so tall as the Fir-tree, which was so anxious to get away. These young trees, which were always the prettiest, kept their branches, and were carted away.

"Whither do they go?" asked the Fir-tree. "They are not taller than I am, — one is even smaller; and why do they retain their branches?"

"That we know; that we know!" chirped the Sparrows. "In town we have peeped in through the windows, and there these trees become the object of the greatest magnificence possible. We have peeped in through the windows, and seen them planted in a warm room, and covered with the loveliest things, — gilt apples, gingerbread, playthings, and hundreds of colored candles."



"And then?" — asked the Fir-tree trembling in all its branches. "And what occurs then?"

"Well, more we have not seen," they answered.

"I wonder whether I am destined for such splendor!" thought the Fir-tree. "That is better than to journey across the sea. Oh, how I long for it! If it were only Christmas! Now I am as tall as the others which were carried away last year. Oh, if I only were on the cart! — in the warm room with all that splendor! And then —? Then comes something better, something finer still; why would they otherwise decorate me so? There must follow something better, something much grander; but what? Oh, how I suffer and long for it! I do not feel myself!"

"Be happy with us," said the Air and the Sunshine; "be happy with your youth, in God's free Nature!"

But the Fir-tree was not happy. It grew and grew. It was green both winter and summer; people looked at it, and said, "It is a pretty tree," and at Christmas it was the first to fall. The axe went through the marrow, and it fell with a sigh. It felt a pain, a fainting sensation, so that it could not think of any happiness. It was sad at having to leave its home, the spot where it had grown up, for it knew it would never again see the dear old comrades, — the little bushes, and the flowers around, yes, perhaps not even the birds. The departure was far from being a pleasant one.

It did not recover till it was taken off the cart, when it heard a man say, "This is a very pretty one; it will do."

Then two servants in livery came, and carried it into a splendid room, on the walls of which hung portraits, while on the great marble mantelpiece stood Chinese vases. There were lovely chairs and sofas, and books and playthings, all which had cost hundreds of pounds, — at least, so the children said.

And the Fir-tree was raised in a barrel of sand; but nobody could see what it was, for the barrel was covered with green cloth, and stood on a fine mat. Oh, how the Tree trembled! What was going to happen? Servants and ladies went about decorating it. Nets cut from colored paper were filled with all kinds of sweets, and hung on the branches, and gilt apples and walnuts were attached like real ones, together with a number of little red, blue, and white candles. Dolls, looking like human, — the Tree had never seen such things, — were hung on the branches, and right at the top a great, golden star was fixed.



"To-night," they all said, — "to-night it shall glitter."

"Oh," thought the Tree, "were it only night! Were only the candles lighted! And what next? Perhaps the trees and the sparrows from the forest will come to look at me. Perhaps I shall grow fast here, and be decorated both winter and summer."

Yes, the Fir-tree was so sure of it, that it quite had the "bark-ache" from longing; and that is for a tree as unpleasant as headache is to us.

Then the candles were lighted. Oh, what a splendor! The Tree trembled so thereat that a branch caught fire and quite blazed.

"Oh, dear!" cried the ladies, and put it out.



The Fir-tree did not dare to tremble any more; it was so terrified; it was so afraid to lose any of its splendor; it was quite dazzled by its own magnificence.

Just then the folding-doors opened, and a number of children rushed in, nearly upsetting the Tree, while some older people followed behind. The little ones stood perfectly quiet for a while; then they shouted with joy, danced round the Tree, and one present after another was stripped from it.

"What *are* they doing?" thought the Tree. "What *is* going to happen now?" And the candles burnt right down to the branches,



and as they did so they were put out, and at last the children were allowed to plunder the Tree. Oh, how they fell on to it! indeed, if it had not been fastened to the ceiling at the top it would have tumbled over.

The children romped about with their presents, and nobody paid any attention to the Tree but the old nurse, who looked about for a forgotten apple or nut.

"A story! a story!" cried the children, drawing a little stout man under the Tree. And he took his seat right under it; "for then we are in the woods," he said, "and it will do the Tree good to hear it. But I am only going to tell *one* story; so which do you want, — the one about Daddy Longlegs, or Jack the Giant-killer who won the Princess?"

"Daddy Longlegs!" cried some. "Jack the Giant-killer!" shouted others. They cried and shouted; the Fir-tree alone remained silent; but it thought, "Am I not to do something?" But of course it had performed its share.

And the little stout man told the story of Jack the Giant-killer, and the children clapped their hands and cried, "Another! another!" They also wanted to hear the one about Daddy Longlegs. The Fir-tree was listening, quite overcome; never had the birds in the forest told such stories. "Jack the Giant-killer won the Princess in spite of all," it thought. "Yes, that is the way of the world. Who knows? even I may rise to something great." And the Tree looked forward to the next day, thinking it would again be dressed with candles, fruit, and playthings.

"To-morrow I shall not tremble," it thought. "I will just enjoy all my splendor then. To-morrow I shall hear more stories." And the Tree stood quiet and thoughtful all the night.

In the morning a boy and a girl came into the room. "Now they will begin again," thought the Tree. But they dragged it up the stairs to a loft, where it was thrown into a dark corner.

"What does this mean?" thought the Tree. "What am I to do here? What shall I hear here?" And it leaned against the wall in deep thought.

And the Fir-tree had plenty of time for that, for days and nights went by without anybody coming. The Tree was quite broken down by being thus forgotten.

"Now it is winter out there," it thought. "The ground is frozen hard, and covered with snow. They cannot plant me now; that is the reason why I am placed here till the spring. How kind and considerate



they are! If it only was n't so frightfully dull here! Not even a little hare! After all, it was indeed pleasant out there in the forest when snow lay on the ground and the hare ran by, — even when he jumped across me. But I did not think so then. Here it is so terribly quiet."

"Peep! peep!" cried in the same moment a little mouse running out on the floor, followed by another. They smelt the Fir-tree, and ran between the branches.

"It is very cold," they said; "otherwise it is pleasant here. Don't you think so too, old Fir-tree?"

"I am not *old*," replied the Fir-tree; "there are others much older than I am."

"Whence do you come, and what can you tell us?" they asked; for they were very curious. "Tell us about the best place in the world. Have you been there? Have you been in the larder, where the cheese lie in rows and the hams hang under the ceiling; where one dances on tallow candles, and goes in lean and comes out fat?"

"I do not know that place," replied the Fir-tree, "but I know the forest, where the sun shines and the birds sing." And so it told all about its youth; and the little mice, which had never heard anything like it, were delighted, and exclaimed, "Oh, how much you have seen; how happy you must be!"

"*I?*" repeated the Tree, ruminating on its own story. "Yes, when I now consider, it *was* a pleasant time." And then it related about Christmas-eve, and how it had been dressed.

"Oh," said the mice; "how lucky you have been, old Fir-tree!"

"I am not at all *old*," retorted the Tree. "I only came from the forest this winter. I am in my best years."

"How nicely you relate!" said the mice; and next night they brought four more to hear the Tree relate; and the more it told, the more vividly it remembered it all, and it thought, "That *was* really a happy time. But it may return; it may return. Jack the Giant-killer won the Princess," it thought. "So may I do too;" and the Tree thought of a lovely little birch-tree out in the woods. It was a real Princess to the Fir-tree.

"Who is Jack the Giant-killer?" asked the mice. And so the Fir-tree told them the whole story, for it knew every word of it, and the little mice were ready to jump into the Tree with sheer delight.

The next night came several more mice, and on Sunday even two big rats; but they said that they did not think much of the story, and that grieved the mice very much, and they too now thought less of it.



"Do you know only that one?" they asked the Fir-tree.

"Yes, only that one," responded the Tree. "I heard it the happiest night of my life; but then I did not know how happy I was."

"It is a very poor story," remarked the rats, — "very poor indeed. Don't you know any about tallow candles or bacon, — no larder-stories?"

"No, I don't," confessed the Fir-tree.

"Well, then, we are much obliged," said the rats; and away they went.

At last even the little mice came no more, and the Fir-tree sighed and said, "When they sat around me it was still something. Now, that too is over. But I will make up for it when I am taken out again."

But when was that?

It was early one morning that some persons entered the loft and began to move some boxes and rubbish, and the Fir-tree was also dragged out. Certainly it was treated rather roughly, but still it was dragged to the staircase and saw daylight.

"Now life begins again," thought the Tree, seeing the sun and feeling the fresh air — and then it lay in the courtyard. Everything happened so quickly that the Fir-tree quite forgot to look at itself, for there was so much to look at. The house lay close to a garden where roses bloomed, scenting the air with their fragrance, and swallows wheeled around, chirping gayly, "Quee — wee — whit! Quee — wee — whit!"

"Now I shall live again!" exclaimed the Fir-tree, stretching out its branches. Alas! they were withered and yellow! It lay in a heap of weeds and thistles, and the golden paper star was still at its top glittering in the sunshine.

"Just see what still remains on that nasty old Christmas-tree!" cried one of the boys who had danced gayly round it; and trampling on it, he tore away the star.

And the Fir-tree looked at the loveliness around, and then at itself, and it wished it had been allowed to remain in the loft. It thought of its budding youth in the forest, of the happy Christmas-eve, of the little mice, and of Jack the Giant-killer.

"It is all over," said the Tree to itself, — "all over. If I had only enjoyed it while I was happy! It is all over now."

Then a man came and cut the Tree into pieces, which were thrown into the kitchen fire. They burnt very prettily, but each one sighed so heavily that it sounded like a pistol-shot; therefore the children ran to the fires and cried each time, "Piff! paff!" But with every heavy sigh the

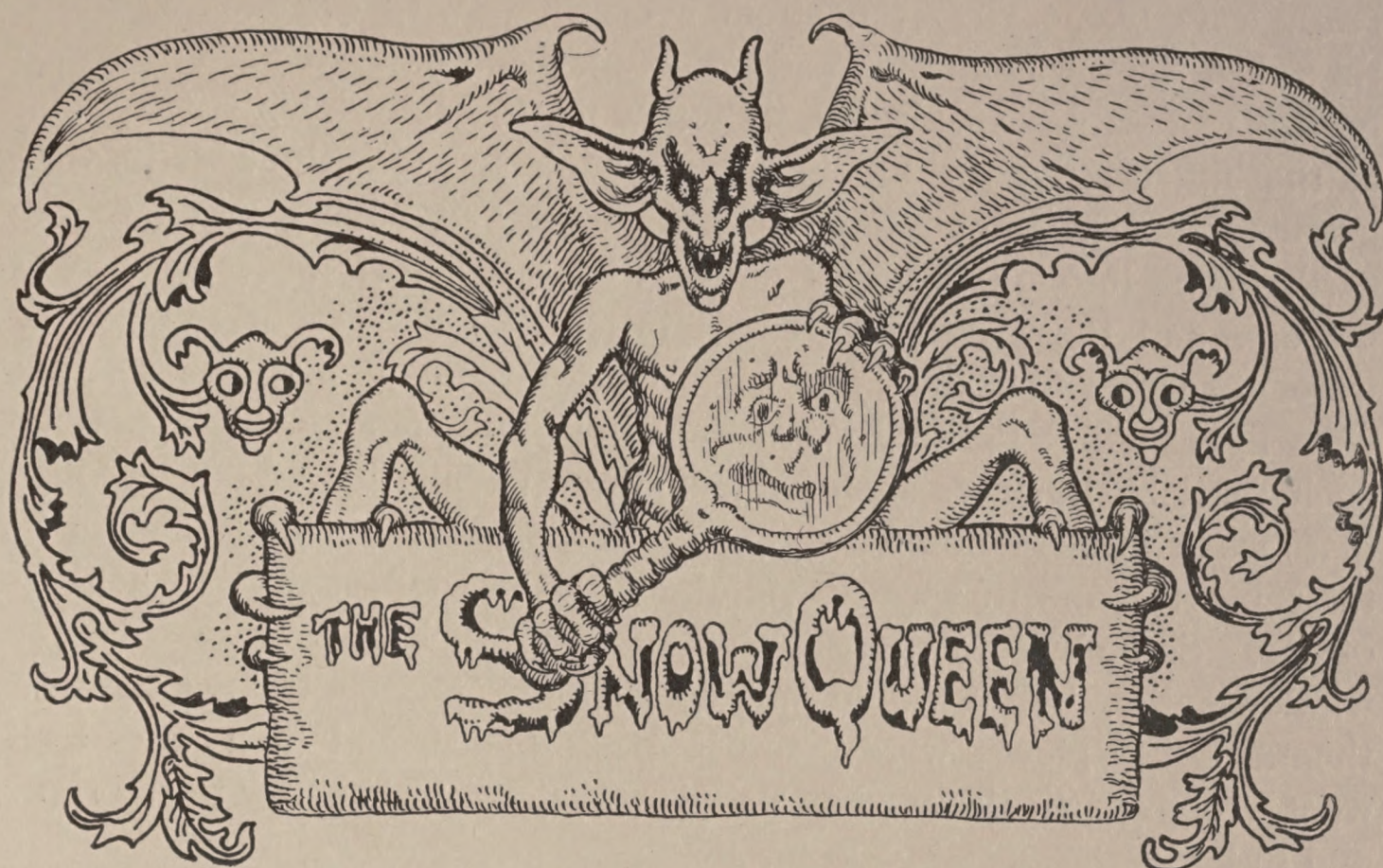


Fir-tree thought of the hot summer's day or the cold winter's night in the forest, of the bright stars, and of the only story it knew. And so the Fir-tree was burnt to ashes.

The boys played in the yard, and the smallest wore the golden star which the Fir-tree had carried on its happiest night on his breast. Now that was over, the Fir-tree's life over, and the story too. Over! over! and that is the end of all stories.







A STORY IN SEVEN PARTS.

*First Part,—which deals with the Looking-glass and its Fragments.*

WELL, now we are going to begin, and when we have got to the end of the story we shall know more than we do now, for it is of a wicked demon,—one of the very worst.

One day he was in high spirits, for he had made a looking-glass which possessed this peculiarity,—that everything good or beautiful reflected in it dwindled down to almost nothing, but whatever was worthless and unsightly stood out boldly and became still worse. The most beautiful landscapes when seen in it looked only like cooked spinach, and even handsome people became repulsive, or stood on their heads and looked ridiculous. The faces were so distorted that they could not be recognized; and if any one had a freckle, never mind how small, it was sure to spread over nose and mouth. That was highly amusing, the demon said. When anything good or innocent entered a man's head there was a grin on the face of the looking-glass, and the demon laughed heartily at his ingenious invention. All who attended his school of sorcery related everywhere that a miracle had happened, and that now, for the first time, one could see what man and the world



really were like. They ran about everywhere with the looking-glass, till at last there was no man and no country that had not been distorted by it. Not satisfied with this, they flew up to Heaven with it to scoff at the angels; but the looking-glass shook so violently with its own grinning that it slipped out of their hands, and having fallen to the earth broke into hundreds of millions of billions of pieces, ay, even more,—and these caused greatest mischief, for some of the pieces were not larger than dust, and whoever got them in his eyes as they were flying about in the air saw the whole human race distorted; for each particle, however small, retained the peculiarity of the looking-glass when whole. Some men even got a small piece of the glass in their hearts; and that was dreadful, for the heart became like a lump of ice. Some of the pieces were so large that they were used for window-panes, but it would not do to look at one's friends through them. Other pieces were made into spectacles, and then indeed all went wrong, particularly when people put them on in order to see right and to be just.

And some of the dust of the broken glass is still flying about in the air. But now we shall hear.

*Second Part.—A Little Boy and a Little Girl.*

IN a large city, where there were so many people and houses that there was not room enough for all to have even a little garden, and where they were mostly, therefore, obliged to be satisfied with flowers in flower-pots, there lived two poor children who had a garden a little larger than a flower-pot. They were not brother and sister, but were as fond of each other as if they had been so. Their parents lived exactly opposite each other, in two attics; and where the roof of the one house would have joined the other they were separated by a gutter running between them; but in each house there was a small window, so that one had but to step across the gutter to reach from the one attic to the other.

Outside each window was a large wooden box, in which grew some kitchen-herbs and a rose-tree, flourishing equally well in both. It occurred to the parents to place the boxes crossways over the gutter, so that they reached nearly from one window to the other, looking like two walls covered with flowers. For peas hung down over the sides of



the boxes, and the branches of the rose-trees bent forward towards each other, so that it looked almost like a triumphal arch of leaves and flowers. As the boxes were very high, and the children not allowed to climb upon them, they often received permission to get out of the windows, where, seated on their little stools under the rose-trees, they used to play together.

In winter there was an end to this amusement, for the windows were often quite covered with ice; but then the children warmed halfpence on the stove, and laying the warm coin against the frozen glass made a beautiful peep-hole, so round! and behind each there shone a bright, sparkling eye,—that of the little girl and the little boy. His name was Kay, and hers Gerda. In summer they could be together with one jump; but in winter they had to run down all the stairs of the one house and up those of the other, while the snow was falling without.

“Those are the white bees swarming,” the old Grandmother used to say.

“Have they a queen too?” asked the little boy, for he knew there was such a one among the real bees.

“Yes, they have,” said the Grandmother. “She is flying there, where they are swarming thickest; she is the largest of them all, and she never rests quiet on the ground, but flies up again into the black clouds. Often during the winter night she flies through the streets of the town and looks in through the windows, which are then covered with frost in such strange forms as if they were so many flowers.”

“Yes, that I have seen,” said both children; and now they knew that it was true.

“Can the Snow-queen enter here?” asked the little girl.

“Let her come,” said the boy, “and I will put her on the stove; then she will melt.”

But the Grandmother smoothed his hair and told them other stories.

That evening, when little Kay was at home and half undressed, he climbed into a chair by the side of the window and looked through the hole. Some flakes of snow were falling, and one among them, the very largest, remained lying on the rim of the flower-box. It increased more and more, till at last it became a lady dressed in the finest white gauze, as if formed by millions of star-like flakes. She was so beautiful, but of ice,—dazzling, glistening ice; and yet she was alive. Her eyes sparkled like two bright stars, but they were restless and unsteady. She nodded towards the window and beckoned with her finger, which



frightened the little boy so much that he jumped down from the chair; and just then it seemed as if a large bird flew past the window.

The next day there was a clear frost. Then spring came; the sun shone, the trees began to bud, the swallows built their nests, the windows were opened, and the little children again sat in their tiny garden, high up on the roof in the gutter.

The roses bloomed more beautifully than ever this summer; and the little girl having learned a hymn in which there was mention of roses, it reminded her of her own, and she sang the hymn to the little boy, who joined in it, —

“Though the bloom of the rose will fade away,  
We shall meet the dear Christ-child some day.”

The little ones held each other by the hand, kissed the roses, and looked into the bright sunshine, as if beholding the Christ-child.

What delightful summer days those were, and how pleasant it was to be out of doors near the fresh rose-trees, which seemed as if they would never have done blooming!

Kay and Gerda were seated, looking over a picture-book of animals and birds, when, just as the church-bells struck five, Kay exclaimed, “Oh, something sharp has run into my heart, and now something has flown into my eyes!”

The little girl took him round the neck and looked in his eyes; but no, there was nothing to be seen.

“I think it is gone again,” he said; but it was not gone. It was just one of the pieces of the magic glass, which, we recollect, fell and was broken, — the hateful glass that made everything great and good reflected in it appear small and contemptible; but what was bad and mean was made most of, and the

faults in anything became very prominent. Poor Kay had got one of these pieces into his heart too, and soon that would become a lump of ice. It did not hurt him any longer, but still it was there.

“Why are you crying?” he asked. “It makes you look so ugly,



“KAY AND GERDA WERE SEATED  
TOGETHER.”



and there is nothing whatever the matter with me." Then all at once he exclaimed, "Look, how nasty that rose is! it is all worm-eaten; and this one is quite out of shape. They are ugly flowers, like the box in which they grow;" and he kicked the box, and tore off some of the roses.

"What are you doing, Kay?" cried the little girl; and as he saw her fright he tore off another rose and clambered in through his window, away from the dear little Gerda.

When she afterwards came with the picture-book he said it was only fit for babies; and when the old Grandmother told stories, he would constantly interrupt her with a "but;" and when he could manage it, he got behind her, and putting a pair of spectacles on his nose, imitated her so exactly that all who saw him laughed. Soon he could mimic the inhabitants of the whole street, imitating their peculiarities and weaknesses, so that people said, "That boy has a wonderful head;" but it was only the glass that had got into his eyes, the glass that was in his heart; and that was the reason why he teased even little Gerda, who loved him with all her heart.

His play was now quite different from what it used to be, it was so sensible. One winter's day, when it was snowing, he brought a large magnifying-glass, and holding out a corner of his blue coat, let the snow-flakes fall upon it.

"Look through the glass, Gerda," he said; and the snow-flakes appeared much larger, looking like beautiful flowers or ten-cornered stars; they were quite beautiful to look at. "Now, are not these more interesting than the real flowers?" Kay said. "See, there is not a single fault in them, they are all perfect; if they could but remain without melting!"

Soon after, Kay appeared with large gloves on, carrying his little sliding-sledge on his back; and he shouted in Gerda's ear, "I have got leave to go to the great square, where the other boys play;" and he was gone.

There, in the square, the boldest of the boys fastened their sledges behind the farmers' carts, and went a good way with them. All was life; and when they were at the height of their play there came a large long sledge, painted entirely white, and in it sat a figure muffled up in white fur, with a white fur cap on. The sledge drove round the square ten times, and Kay quickly fastened his little sledge to it. It ran faster and faster, and then turned into one of the streets that



run out of the square. The person driving turned round and nodded so friendly to Kay, just as if they knew each other; and each time he was on the point of unfastening his sledge the person nodded to him again, so that he remained where he was, and they drove out through the city gates. The snow began to fall so thickly that the little boy could not see his hand, and then he undid the string with which he had fastened himself to the large sledge; but that was of no use, for his little sledge remained attached to the other, and on they flew as fast as the wind. He called out as loud as he could, but no one heard him, and the sledge seemed to drive over hedges and ditches; then he grew quite frightened, and tried to say his prayers, but could think of nothing but his multiplication-table.

The snow-flakes grew larger and larger, till at last they appeared like white chickens, when of a sudden they turned aside and the large sledge stopped. The person driving it stood up, and Kay now saw that it was a lady, tall, slim, and dazzlingly white. It was the Snow-queen.

"We have had a good drive," she said; "but you are cold? Come, creep under my bear-skin." And she seated him by her side in the sledge, covering him up with the skin; but he felt as if he were sinking into a snow-drift.

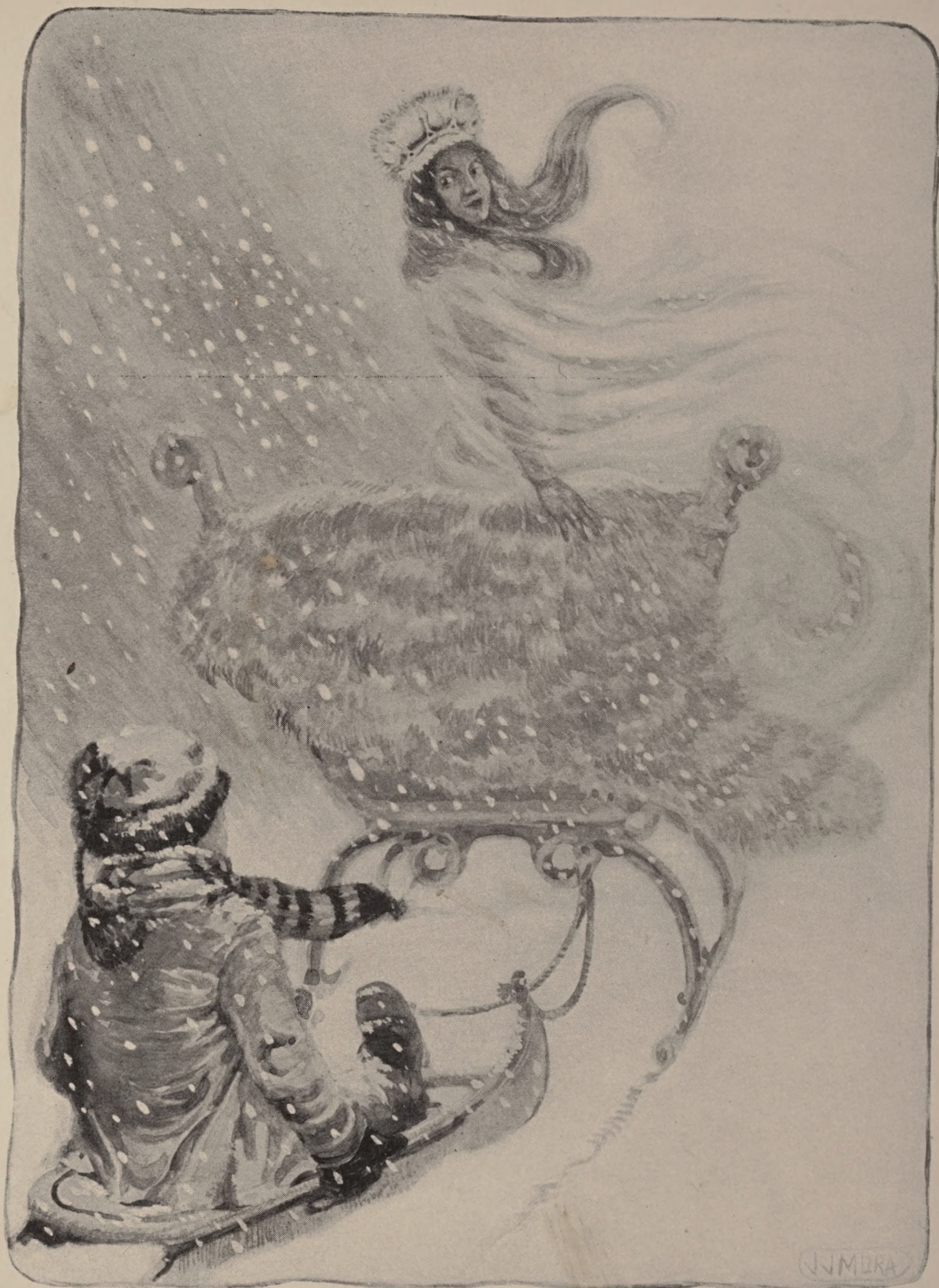
"Are you still cold?" she asked, kissing him on the forehead. Oh! that was colder than ice, and seemed to penetrate to his very heart, which was already almost a lump of ice. He felt as if he were going to die, but only for a moment, after which he was comfortable, and did not in the least feel the cold.

"My sledge! do not forget my sledge!" he cried. Of that he thought first; and it was fastened to one of the white chickens, which followed with it on its back. The Snow-queen kissed Kay again, and then he forgot little Gerda, Grandmother, and all at home.

"You must have no more kisses," she said, "or else I shall kiss you to death."

Kay looked at her; she was so beautiful, and a more intelligent, lovely face he could not imagine. She no longer seemed of ice, as when she sat outside on the window-sill and beckoned to him. In his eyes she was perfection, and he had no fear; he told her that he could reckon in his head, and knew the number of square miles the country contained, as well as the number of its inhabitants, and she smiled at all he said. It then seemed to him as if he did not yet know enough, and











he looked up into the vast expanse of air. She flew up with him, higher and higher, on to the black clouds; and the storm whistled and howled, but it sounded like old songs. They flew over forests and lakes, over seas and continents. Beneath them the cold wind whistled, the wolves howled, the snow sparkled; but high above them the moon shone brightly, and on this Kay's eyes were fixed the whole long winter's night. During the day he slept at the feet of the Snow-queen.

*Third Part. — The Flower-garden of the Sorceress.*

BUT how did little Gerda get on when Kay did not return? What could have become of him? No one knew, no one could give any information. The boys could only tell that they had seen him fasten his sledge to a magnificent large one, which had driven along the street and out of the city gates. No one could tell where he was. Many tears were shed, and little Gerda cried more than all. Then it was said he was dead, that he had fallen into the river which flowed past the town. Oh, what long, dreary winter days those were!

Now spring came and warm sunshine.

"Kay is dead and gone!" said little Gerda.

"I do not think so," said the Sunshine in reply.

"Kay is dead and gone!" she said to the Swallows.

"We do not think so," they answered; and at last little Gerda did not think so either.

"I will put on my new red shoes," she said one morning, — "those which Kay has never seen, — and I will go down to the River and ask it about him."

It was still early. She kissed her old Grandmother, who was not awake yet, and having put on the red shoes, went all alone out of the city gates and down to the River.

"Is it true that you have taken my little playfellow?" she said. "I will give you my red shoes if you will restore him to me."

It seemed to her as if the waves nodded in a peculiar way, and she then took her red shoes — the things she liked best of all she had — and threw them both into the river; but they fell near the shore and were washed on land again. It was exactly as if the River would not take what was so dear to her, for it had not little Kay to give in return; but she thought she had not thrown the shoes out far enough, so she got



into a boat, which lay among the rushes, and going to the farthest end of it she threw the shoes into the water again. But the boat was not fastened, and the motion she caused in it set it off from land. She noticed it and hastened to get back, but it was already more than a yard from land, and now drifted fast out into the river.

Then little Gerda became very frightened, and began to cry; but no one heard her excepting the Sparrows, and they could not carry her on to land, but they flew along the banks singing, as if to console her, "Here we are! here we are!" The boat glided down the stream, and little Gerda sat there quite quiet, in her stockings, while her little red shoes floated after; but they could not overtake the boat.



It was very pretty on both sides; there were beautiful flowers, old trees, and meadows with sheep and cows, but not a human being was to be seen.

"Perhaps the River will carry me to little Kay," she thought, and then she grew more cheerful; she stood up, and for hours she admired the beautiful green banks. At length she came to a large orchard full of cherry-trees, in which there stood a little house with strange red and blue windows. It had a straw roof, and in front stood two wooden soldiers, who presented arms as Gerda passed.

She called to them, thinking they were alive, but they returned no answer, as was quite natural.

Gerda cried still louder; and then there came an old, a very old woman out of the house, supporting herself with a hooked stick. She



wore a large straw hat painted all over with the most beautiful flowers.

"You poor little child!" said the old woman, "how did you get on to the great rushing river, and be thus carried out into the world?" And she walked right into the river, caught hold of the boat with the hook of her stick, and having drawn it to land, lifted little Gerda out.

Gerda was delighted to feel herself on dry land again, though a little bit frightened at the strange old woman.

"Come, and tell me who you are and how you came here," she said.

And Gerda told her. The old woman shook her head, mumbling, "Hem! hem!" and when Gerda asked her whether she had seen little Kay, she said that he had not passed yet, but that he would be sure to come, and that therefore she must not be sad, but had better taste her cherries, and look at her flowers, which were more beautiful than any picture-book, and that each could tell a story. She then took Gerda by the hand, and having led her into the house, locked the door.

The windows were very high up, and the panes of glass red, blue, and yellow, so that the light came in in various colors, which looked very strange. On the table were the most delicious cherries, of which Gerda ate as many as she felt inclined, for she had permission to do so. While she was eating, the old woman combed her hair with a golden comb, and her beautiful yellow hair shone so bright, and curled round her pretty, cheerful little face, which was as round and blooming as a rose.

"I have always longed to have a dear little girl like you," said the old woman, "and you shall see how well we will get on together." As she combed Gerda's hair, the little girl forgot more and more her playfellow Kay, for the old woman was a sorceress; but she was not a wicked witch, and only conjured a little, just for her own amusement, and she wished to keep Gerda with her. Therefore she went into the garden, and touching all the rose-trees with her stick, they sank down into the black earth, so that there was no trace left of where they had stood. The old woman was afraid that when Gerda saw the rose-trees she might think of her own, and remembering little Kay, run away.

She then took Gerda into the flower-garden. Oh, what a scent, and what splendor! There were all imaginable flowers of every season of the year, so that no picture-book could be finer or prettier. Gerda danced with delight, and played till the sun went down behind



the high cherry-trees, when she had a beautiful bed with red silk pillows stuffed with violets, and she slept and dreamed as delightfully as any queen on her wedding-day.

The next day she again played with the flowers in the warm sunshine; and thus many days passed by. Gerda knew every flower; but as many as there were, it seemed to her as if one were wanting, though she did not know which. Now, one day she was sitting, looking at the old woman's painted hat, and just the most beautiful of the flowers was a rose. The old woman had forgotten to blot that out when she banished the others into the earth; but so it is when one has not one's thoughts about one. "What!" Gerda cried, "are there no roses here?" She looked in all the beds, but none was to be found; and then she sat down and cried, when it so happened that her tears fell on the spot where a rose-tree was buried, and as the warm tears fell on the ground the tree sprang up in full bloom and with blossoms as beautiful as they had ever been. Gerda threw her arms round the tree, kissed the roses, and thought of her own rose-tree at home, as well as of little Kay.

"Oh, how I have been delayed!" said the little girl. "I came to look for Kay. Do you know where he is?" she asked the flowers. "Do you think he is dead?"

"He is not dead," said the Roses, "for we have been in the earth, where all the dead are, and Kay was not there."

"Thank you very much," said Gerda; and she went to the other flowers, looked into their calyxes, and asked, "Cannot *you* tell me where little Kay is?"

But each flower stood there in the sunshine, dreaming its own fairy-tale, which Gerda had to listen to; but of Kay they knew nothing.

And what did the Tiger-lily say?

"Do you hear the drum? Drum! drum! — only two notes, always the same, — drum! drum! Listen to the funeral dirge of the women and the chant of the priests! The Hindoo woman stands in her long red mantle on the funeral pile; the flames flicker around her and her dead husband; but the Hindoo woman thinks of a living one there in the crowd, of him from whose eyes the fire burns hotter, and troubles her heart more than the flames which will soon burn her body to ashes. Will the flame of the heart be consumed in the flame of the funeral pile?"

"I don't understand a word of all that," said little Gerda.



"That is my story," answered the Tiger-lily.

What does the Convolvulus say?

"At the end of a mountain path rises an old castle. The ivy climbs up the old red walls, thickly covering the balcony, and there stands a beautiful girl. She leans over the balustrade, looking eagerly down the path. No rose is fresher than she; no apple-blossom carried from the tree by the wind moves more gracefully. Now her magnificent satin garment rustles. Is he not coming yet?"

"Do you mean Kay?" asked little Gerda.

"I am speaking only of my story, my dream," the Convolvulus answered.

What says the Snowdrop?

"A board hangs on a rope fastened between two trees. That is a swing; and two pretty little girls, with dresses as white as snow, and long green ribbons fluttering from their hats, are seated in it, swinging. Their brother, who is bigger than they, is standing in the swing, with one arm round the rope to keep himself up, for in one hand he holds a cup and in the other a clay pipe; he is blowing soap-bubbles. The swing is moving, and the bubbles fly with beautiful, constantly changing colors; the last still hangs to the pipe and is trembling in the wind. A little black dog is standing on its hind legs, wanting to get into the swing too. The bubble floats away, the dog falls and barks, for it is teased. The dog is angry and the bubble bursts. A swinging-board and a bursting bubble are my song."

"I dare say your story is very pretty, but you tell it in such a melancholy way, and there is not a word in it about little Kay."

What do the Hyacinths say?

"There were three sisters so lovely and fragile. The dress of one was red, of another blue, and that of the third entirely white. Hand in hand they danced by the side of a lake in the bright moonshine. They were not fairies, but human beings. There was a sweet scent, and the girls disappeared in the forest. The scent became stronger, and three coffins, in which lay the three beautiful girls, glided out of the forest and floated across the lake, glow-worms flying around them. Are the girls asleep, or are they dead? The scent from the flowers says they are dead, and the vesper bell tolls for their funeral."

"You make me quite sad," said Gerda. "You have such a strong scent that I cannot help thinking of the dead girls. Can it be that Kay is really dead? The Roses have been buried, and they say 'No.'"



"Ding, dong!" sounded the Hyacinth bells. "We do not toll for little Kay, — we do not know him; we only sing our song, the only one we know."

Gerda went to the Buttercup, which shone from among its glittering green leaves, and said, "You are a little bright sun. Tell me if you know whether I shall find my playfellow."

The Buttercup shone so beautifully, and looked at Gerda, but its song was not of Kay either.

"In a small yard the sun shone so warmly the first day of spring; the rays were reflected from the white walls of the house, and close by stood the first yellow flower, shining like gold in the sun. The old grandmother was sitting out of doors in her chair, and her granddaughter, a poor but beautiful servant-girl, was parting from her after a short visit. She kissed her grandmother. In that kiss there was a blessing. Well, that is my little story."

"My poor old Grandmother!" Gerda sighed; "she is no doubt longing for me, and is sad about me as she was about Kay. But I will soon be back home, and bring Kay with me. It is of no use my asking the flowers, for they only know their own song, and can give me no information." She then tucked up her dress, in order to be able to run faster; but as she jumped over a Narcissus, it struck her across the legs. So she stopped, looked at the long white flower, and said, "Perhaps you have something to tell me;" and she bent down her ear to the flower. Now, what did the Narcissus say?

"I see myself! I see myself!" it said. "Oh, how beautiful I am! Up above, in a small attic, stands a little dancer half-dressed. She stands first on one leg and then on both. She is nothing but a vision. She is pouring water out of the teapot upon a piece of stuff; that is her stays. Cleanliness is next to godliness. And the white dress which hangs upon the nail has also been washed in the teapot and dried on the roof. She puts it on, and tying a yellow handkerchief round her neck, makes the dress look whiter still. With one leg out, look! she is standing on a stalk. I see myself! I see myself!"

"I care little about that," said Gerda. "You need not tell me that;" and she ran off to the end of the garden.

The door was locked; but she pressed heavily against the rusty lock and it sprang open, when out she ran on her bare feet, out into the wide world. She looked back three times, but there was no one following her. When she could run no longer, she seated herself upon a large



stone, and looking round her, saw that the summer was gone; it was late in the autumn; but that could not be seen in the beautiful garden, where the sun was always shining, and where there were flowers of all seasons.

"Oh, goodness! how long I have been delayed!" little Gerda said. "Why, it has grown autumn, and now there is no time to rest!" So she got up again to go on.

Oh, dear! how sore and tired her little feet were! and all around her it looked cold and cheerless. The long leaves of the willow were quite yellow, and the dew dripped from them. One leaf after another fell, and only the sloe-thorn bore fruit, but it was so sour that it made her make faces. How bleak and depressing it was in the wide world!

*Fourth Part.—The Prince and the Princess.*

GERDA was obliged to rest again; and just opposite the spot where she was sitting a large Raven was hopping about on the snow. It had been watching her for some time, shaking its head, and now it cried, "Caw!



caw! how do?" It could not express itself better, but meant well with the little girl, and asked where she was going all alone into the wide world. Gerda felt how much there lay in that one word "alone;" and then she told her whole story, asking whether it had seen Kay.

The Raven nodded quite knowingly, and said, "It may be! it may be!"

"What! you think you have seen him!" the little girl cried, and hugged the Raven so that she nearly squeezed it to death.

"Gently, gently!" said the Raven. "I think I know; I think it

"NOW IT CRIED, 'CAW! CAW! HOW DO?'" may have been little Kay; but, for certain, by now the Princess has driven *you* out of his thoughts."

"Does he live with a Princess?" asked Gerda.



"I understand what you say," replied the Raven, "but I find it difficult to express myself in your language. If you understand the Raven's tongue it will go better."

"No, I never learned that," said Gerda; "but my Grandmother knew it. Oh, had I but learned it!"

"It does not matter," said the Raven; "I will tell you the story as well as I can, though it will be done badly;" and then it related all it knew.

"In the kingdom in which we are now sitting lives a Princess, who is awfully clever; but then, she has read all the newspapers in the world,—read and forgotten them again, so clever is she. Lately she was sitting on her throne, which is said not to be over-pleasant, when she began to sing; and the theme of her song was, 'Why should I not marry?' 'Well, there is something in that,' she said, and so she determined to get married; but she must have a husband who knew how to answer when spoken to, not one who could only stand and look grand, for that is so stupid. Then she had all her court ladies drummed together, and when they heard what her intention was they were much delighted. 'That's what I like,' one said; and, 'I have been thinking of that too,' said another. You may believe every word of what I tell you," said the Raven, "for I have a tame sweetheart who wanders at liberty all over the palace, and it is she who has told me all."

The sweetheart was, as a matter of course, a raven too.

"The newspapers appeared with a border of hearts and the Princess's monogram. Therein might be read that every good-looking young man was at liberty to go to the palace and converse with the Princess, and that she would marry him who spoke the best and who appeared to feel at home there. Yes, yes!" said the Raven, "you may believe what I say, for it is as true as I am sitting here. There was a great concourse of people, crowding and pushing; but nobody succeeded, either the first or second day. They could all speak well enough out in the street; but when they got into the palace and saw the guards in silver and the stairs lined with footmen in gold, and saw the splendid rooms, they became quite bewildered; so that when they stood before the throne on which the Princess sat, they could do nothing but repeat the last word she had uttered, and that she did not particularly care about hearing repeated. It was exactly as if the good people had swallowed snuff and fallen asleep, till they were in the street again, when they could talk fast enough. There was a string of people all the way from the city



gates up to the palace, and I was there myself to see them," said the Raven. "They grew hungry as well as thirsty; but in the palace they did not get as much as a glass of water. Some, it is true, had prudently taken some bread and butter with them, but did not share it with their neighbor, for they thought, 'Let him look hungry, and the Princess will certainly not have *him*.'"

"But Kay, little Kay!" asked Gerda; "when did he come? Was he among the crowd?"

"Patience! patience! for we are just coming to him. It was on the third day, there came a little person without horse or carriage, but walking merrily straight up to the palace. His eyes were bright like yours, and he had beautiful long hair, but he was poorly dressed."

"That was Kay!" shouted Gerda with delight. "At last I have found him!" and she clapped her little hands.

"He had a little knapsack on his back," continued the Raven.

"No, that must have been his sledge," Gerda said; "for he went away with his sledge on his back."

"That may be," replied the Raven, "for I did not pay particular attention to it; but this I know from my sweetheart, that when he got inside the palace and saw the body-guard in silver, and the footmen in gold on the stairs, he was not in the least abashed, but nodded, and said to them, 'It must be tedious work to stand there on the stairs, so I will go in at once.' The rooms were splendidly lighted, and there were lords and gentlemen walking about barefooted, with gold salvers. It was all quite solemn, though his boots creaked awfully; but he was not in the least concerned."

"That was certainly Kay," Gerda said. "I know he had new boots on, for I heard them creak."

"Yes, creak they did," continued the Raven; "but merrily he walked straight up to the Princess, who was sitting on a pearl as large as a spinning-wheel; and all the court ladies with their maids and their maids' maids, and the courtiers with their servants and their servants' servants, who kept a boy in turn, were standing around, and the nearer they stood to the door the prouder they looked. The servants' servants' boy, who always wears slippers, stands so proudly in the door that one dare scarcely look at him."

"That must be horrible," said little Gerda; "but Kay has gained the Princess for all that."

"If I had not been a Raven I would have had her myself, though I



am engaged," said the Raven. "My tame sweetheart says that he spoke as well as I speak when I am talking our language. He was gay and well behaved, but had not come at all to pay court to the Princess, but only to hear how clever she was. He had every reason to be satisfied with her, and she no less so with him."

"Oh for certain that was Kay," Gerda said, "for he was always so clever; he knew reckoning. Will you not introduce me into the palace?"

"Well, that is easily said," answered the Raven, "but how are we to manage it? I must talk it over with my tame sweetheart, and she will no doubt be able to advise us; for I must tell you that a little girl like you will never obtain permission to enter in the ordinary way."

"Oh, yes, I shall," said Gerda, "for as soon as Kay hears that I am there he will come out directly and fetch me."

"Wait for me there at the stile," said the Raven, and wagging its head, it flew off.

The Raven did not return till late in the evening, when it said: "She sends you all sorts of kind messages, and here is a small loaf for you which she took from the kitchen, where there is plenty of them; for no doubt you are hungry. It is impossible for you to be admitted into the palace, as you are barefooted. The guards in silver and the footmen in gold would never allow it; but do not cry, for you shall go in. My sweetheart knows a little back staircase which leads up to the bedroom, and she knows where to find the key."

So they went into the garden, into the great avenue, where one leaf was falling off after the other; and when the lights in the palace were put out, the Raven led Gerda to a back door, which stood ajar.

Oh, how Gerda's heart beat with fear and anxiety! She felt exactly as if she were going to do something wrong; and yet she only wanted to know whether little Kay was there, and there he must be. So vividly she called to mind his clear eyes and long hair, and it seemed as if she saw him smiling as he used to do when at home they sat together under the roses. He would surely be pleased to see her, and to hear what a long way she had come for his sake, as also to know how they had all fretted at home at his not returning. Oh, what fear, and at the same time what delight!

They were now on the stairs, where a small lamp was burning, and on the floor stood the tame Raven, turning her head first on one side and then on the other, looking at Gerda, who courtesied, as her Grandmother had taught her to do.



"My future husband has said so much to me in your praise, and your story too is very touching," said the tame Raven. "If you, my little lady, will take the lamp, please, I will lead the way. We are going straight there, and we shall not meet any one."

"It seems to me as if some one is coming just behind us," said Gerda; and then there was a rustling past them. It was like shadows on the wall, — horses with flowing manes and slender legs, huntsmen, and ladies and gentlemen on horseback.

"Those are only dreams," said the Raven, "and come to carry the ladies' and gentlemen's thoughts off to the chase; which is well, for we can then examine them better in bed. But I hope that when you have risen to honor and dignity you will show a grateful heart."

"It is quite unnecessary to talk about that," said the Raven from the forest.

They now entered the first room, the walls of which were hung with rose-colored silk and artificial flowers. Here the dreams rushed past them again, but went so fast that Gerda could not catch a sight of them. One room was more splendid than another, — it was almost enough to make one giddy; and now they reached the bedroom. The ceiling here was like large palm-leaves, made of the most beautiful glass, and from the centre were suspended, by a golden branch, two beds in the form of lilies. The one was white, and in that lay the Princess; while the other was red, and in that Gerda was to look for little Kay. She bent one of the red leaves on one side and saw a brown neck. Oh, that was Kay! She called his name out aloud, holding the lamp over him. The dreams rushed past again; he awoke and turned his head: it was not little Kay!

The Prince's neck only was like Kay's; but he was young and handsome. At the same time the Princess's face appeared from among the white lily leaves, and she asked what was the matter. Little Gerda then cried and told her whole story, and all that the Ravens had done for her.

"Poor child!" said the Prince and Princess, praising the Ravens for what they had done, and saying they were not at all angry, but that they must not repeat it. And a reward was promised them.

"Will you be free," asked the Princess, "or will you have a settled appointment as court Ravens, with all the kitchen remains?"

The two Ravens made their bows, and begged they might have a



settled appointment, for they thought of their old age, saying, "It is nice to have something when one gets old."

The Prince then got out of his bed and let Gerda sleep in it; more he could not do. She folded her little hands, and thought, "How good men and animals are!" and then, closing her eyes, she slept soundly. The dreams came flying back, and they looked like angels drawing a sledge, on which sat Kay and nodded. But the whole was only a dream, and was therefore all gone as soon as she awoke.

The next day she was clothed from head to foot in silk and velvet, and she received the offer to remain at the palace and enjoy herself; but she



only begged for a little carriage with a horse, and for a pair of boots, when she would go out again into the wide world and look for Kay.

And she got not only the boots, but a muff; and when she wished to leave, a new coach of pure gold drew up at the door, with the Prince's and Princess's coat-of-arms upon it, like shining stars. The coachman, footman, and outriders — for there were outriders too — wore golden crowns. The Prince and Princess themselves helped her into the carriage and wished her success. The Raven of the forest, who was now married, accompanied her the first ten miles, sitting by her side, — for riding backwards disagreed with him, — while the other Raven stood at the door flapping her wings. She could not go with them, as she suffered



from headache since she had a settled appointment at the palace and got too much to eat. The inside of the carriage was lined with cakes and sweets, and in the seat were fruits and gingerbread nuts.

"Farewell! farewell!" said the Prince and Princess, while little Gerda wept, and the Raven wept too. They went on for ten miles, and then the Raven had to say good-by, which was the saddest parting of all. He flew up into a tree and flapped his black wings as long as he could see the carriage, which shone like the sun.

*Fifth Part. — The Little Robber-girl.*

THEY drove through the dark forest, but the carriage gave a light like a torch, which affected the robbers' eyes so that they could not bear it.

"That is gold! that is gold!" they cried, and rushing forward, seized the horses, killed the little jockeys, coachman, and servants, and then dragged little Gerda out of the carriage.

"She is nice, she is fat, she has been fed upon nuts!" said the old Robber-woman, who had a long bristly beard, and eyebrows which hung down over her eyes.

"Why, she is as good as a fat lamb! how nice she will taste!" and she drew out her long knife, which shone so that it was horrible to look at.

"Au!" the woman cried at the same moment, for she was bitten in the ear by her own daughter, who was hanging at her back, and who was so wild and wicked that nothing could be done with her. "You nasty imp!" cried the mother, and now she had no time to kill Gerda.

"She shall play with me," said the little Robber-girl. "She shall give me her muff and her beautiful dress, and shall sleep with me in my bed;" and she then bit her mother again, so that the woman jumped about, and the robbers laughed, shouting, "See how she dances with her cub!"

"I will get into the carriage," said the Robber-girl; and she would have her own way, for she was so obstinate and spoilt; so she and Gerda entered it, and were driven over stones and through ditches deeper into the forest. The little Robber-girl was no taller than Gerda, but stronger, with broader shoulders and darker skin. Her eyes were black, and had rather a melancholy expression. She laid hold of Gerda



round the waist and said, "They shall not kill you as long as I am not angry with you! You are a princess, I suppose?"

"No," said Gerda, and told all she had undergone, and how much she loved little Kay.

The Robber-girl looked at her quite seriously, nodded her head slightly, and said, "They shall not kill you, even if I am angry with you; for I'll do it myself then." She dried Gerda's eyes, and then put both her hands in the beautiful muff which was so soft and warm.

Now the carriage stopped, and they were in the courtyard of a Robber's castle. It was all in ruins, and the ravens and crows flew out



of the holes, and large bull-dogs, of which each looked as if it could devour a man, sprang towards them; but they did not bark, for that was forbidden.

In the large old smoke-colored hall, in the middle of the stone floor, a huge fire was burning, and the smoke, rising to the roof, had to find itself an outlet. Soup was boiling in a caldron, and hares and rabbits were roasting on spits.

"To-night you shall sleep with me, with all my animals," the Robber-girl said; and after they had had something to eat and drink, they went into a corner, where there was straw and a piece of carpet. More than a hundred pigeons sat above upon laths and sticks, and they all



seemed to be asleep, though they did turn round a little at the approach of the two little girls.

"They all belong to me," said the Robber-girl; and catching hold of one of the nearest by the feet, she shook it until it flapped its wings.

"Kiss her," she cried, touching Gerda in the face with it. "Yonder, behind those bars, there are two wood-pigeons that would fly away directly if they were not properly secured; and here stands my dear old Boo!" As she said this she pulled the horns of a Reindeer, which was fastened by a bright copper ring round its neck. "We have to keep him a prisoner too, or he would be off. Every evening I tickle his throat with my sharp knife, which frightens him dreadfully." The little girl drew a long knife out of a crack in the wall, and let it glide across the Reindeer's throat, which made the poor beast tremble and kick; and the little Robber-girl, laughing, drew Gerda into the bed with her.

"Are you going to keep that knife in bed with you?" Gerda asked, and looked rather frightened at it.

"I always sleep with a knife," said the Robber-girl; "one can never tell what may happen; but let me again hear what you said about little Kay, and why you came out into the wide world." And Gerda told all again, from beginning to end; and the wood-pigeons cooed in their cage, but the others slept. The little Robber-girl put one arm round Gerda's neck, and holding the knife in the other, soon fell asleep; but Gerda could not close her eyes: she did not know whether she was to live, or whether death awaited her. The robbers sat round the fire, drinking and singing, while the Robber-woman turned summersaults. It was quite horrible for the little girl to watch them.

The Wood-pigeons said, "Kourrou! kourrou! we have seen little Kay. A white chicken carried his sledge, and he sat in the Snow-queen's carriage, which drove close over the forest as we lay in our nest. She blew upon us young ones, and all excepting us two died. Kourrou! kourrou!"

"What are you saying up there?" Gerda asked. "Where was the Snow-queen going to? Do you know anything about it?"

"She was most likely going to Lapland, for it is always snow and ice there. Ask the Reindeer that is tied up there."

"It is ice and snow, and it is delightful and healthy there," said the Reindeer. "There one can jump and run about. There the Snow-queen has her summer tent; but her palace is up towards the North Pole, on the island called Spitzbergen."



"Oh, Kay! dear little Kay!" Gerda said.

"Now you must lie quiet," said the Robber-girl, "or I will run the knife into you."

Next morning Gerda told her all that the Wood-pigeons had said, and the little Robber-girl looked quite serious, but nodding her head said, "It does n't matter! it does n't matter! Do you know where Lapland is?" she asked the Reindeer.

"Who should know better than I?" answered the animal, its eyes sparkling. "I was born and bred there, and there I have run about on the snow-field."

"Listen!" said the Robber-girl to Gerda. "You see that all the men are gone; my mother, however, is still here, and she will remain; but about midday she drinks out of a great flask, and then sleeps a little. I will then do something for you." Then she jumped out of bed, rushed to her mother, and pulling her beard, said, "My own beloved goat, good-morning!" Her mother in return boxed her ears so that they became red and blue; but that was from sheer love.

As soon as her mother was asleep, after having drunk out of the flask, the Robber-girl went to the Reindeer and said: "I might still have a good deal of fun, tickling you with the sharp knife, for then you are very amusing; but that does n't matter. I will unfasten you and let you out, so that you may run back to Lapland; but you must make good use of your legs, and carry this little girl to the Snow-queen's palace, where her playfellow is. You heard what she said, for she spoke loud enough, and you were listening." The Reindeer jumped high into the air with delight. The Robber-girl lifted little Gerda on its back, having taken the precaution to tie her fast, and even to give her a little cushion to sit upon. "It does n't matter," she said. "There are your fur boots, for it will be cold; but the muff I shall keep, for it is so pretty. You shall not freeze, however, for you shall have my mother's large, warm gloves, which will reach up to your elbow. There, put them on. Now, as to your hands, you look exactly like my ugly mother."

Gerda cried with joy.

"I won't have you blubbering," said the little Robber-girl; "now you ought to look particularly happy. Here are two loaves and a ham, so you will not die of hunger." Both were fastened behind her; and the little Robber-girl opened the door, having chained up all the big dogs, cut the rope with her sharp knife, and said to the Reindeer, "Now run, but take great care of the little girl."



Gerda stretched out her hands, with the large gloves on, towards the Robber-girl, and cried "Good-by!" and the Reindeer flew as fast as possible through the great forest, and over heath and marsh. The wolves howled, and the birds of prey screamed, "Atsche! atsche!" which sounded exactly like sneezing from the sky.



"Those are my old Northern Lights," said the Reindeer; "see how they shine!" and it ran even faster than before. It ran day and night. The loaves were eaten, and the ham also, and then they were in Lapland.

*Sixth Part. — The Lapp Woman and the Finn Woman.*

THEY stopped at a small house, and a miserable place it was. The roof reached down to the ground, and the door was so low that the inmates had to crawl on their stomachs when they wanted to go in or out. There was no one at home excepting an old Lapp Woman, who was cooking fish by the light of a train-oil lamp, and to her the Reindeer told Gerda's whole story; but his own first, for that appeared to him by far the more important, and the cold had nipped Gerda so that she could not speak.

"Oh, you poor creatures!" said the old Lapp Woman; "you have far to run still. You must go more than a hundred miles into Lapland, for



there the Snow-queen lives. I will write a few words on a dried stock-fish, for I have no paper, and that I will give you for the Finn Woman up there, for she can give you more accurate information than I."

Now as soon as Gerda was warm, and had got something to eat and drink, the old Woman wrote a few words on a dried codfish, begged Gerda to take great care of it, and having tied her on the Reindeer again, off it started. "Atsche! atsche!" it sounded from above, in the air, and the whole night long the Northern Lights shone most beautifully. They arrived in Finmarken, and knocked at the Finn Woman's chimney, for she had no door at all.



It was so hot inside that the Finn Woman was nearly naked. She was small of figure, and very dirty. She immediately undid Gerda's things, taking off her gloves and boots, for it would otherwise have been too hot for her; laid a lump of ice on the Reindeer's head, and then read what was written on the fish. She read it three times, when she knew it by heart; so she put the fish in the soup-pot, for it was good to eat, and she never wasted anything.

Then the Reindeer told its own story and next Gerda's; and the Finn Woman blinked with her clever eyes, but said nothing.

"You are so clever," said the Reindeer; "I know that you can tie all the winds of the world together with one piece of string, so that



when the sailor unfastens the first knot, he has a fair wind; if he unties the second, it blows freshly; but if the third and fourth be untied, the wind rages so that the trees of the forest fall. Won't you prepare the little girl a drink, to give her the strength of twelve men, so that she may vanquish the Snow-queen?"

"The strength of twelve men!" said the Finn Woman. "That would not help her much;" and then she went to a cupboard, from which she took a large rolled-up skin. As she unrolled it there appeared strange letters written upon it, and she read till the water dripped down from her forehead.

But the Reindeer begged again so hard for Gerda, and she looked at the Finn Woman with such beseeching eyes, full of tears, that she again began to blink her eyes, and drawing the Reindeer into a corner, whispered to him, while she put fresh ice upon his head: "Little Kay is still with the Snow-queen, and finds everything there to his taste, so that he thinks it the best place in the world; but this is caused by his having a piece of broken glass in his heart and another piece in his eyes. They must come out, or he will never be a man, and the Snow-queen will retain her full power over him."

"But can you not give little Gerda something, so that she may obtain power over all?"

"I cannot give her greater power than she already possesses; and do you not see how great that is? Do you not see that men and beasts must serve her; and how, barefooted as she is, she has got on so well in the world? She cannot receive her power from us; that is in her own heart, and consists in her being a good, innocent child. If she cannot herself get into the Snow-queen's palace and free little Kay from the glass, we cannot help her. Ten miles from here the Snow-queen's garden begins, and there you must carry the little girl. Set her down at the large bush which stands there in the snow covered with red berries; and do not waste many words, but make haste back here." Then the Finn Woman placed Gerda upon the Reindeer, which ran off as fast as it could. "Oh, I have not got my boots! I have not got my gloves!" little Gerda cried out, for this she noticed in the piercing cold; but the Reindeer did not venture to stop, and it ran on till it came to the bush with the red berries. There it put her down, kissed her, and large bright tears ran down the animal's cheeks when it started off back again. There stood poor Gerda, without boots and without gloves, in the middle of that fearfully cold Lapland!



She ran forward as fast as possible, and was soon met by a whole regiment of snow-flakes, which did not fall from heaven, for the sky was quite clear; but they ran straight along the ground, and the nearer they came the larger they grew. Gerda remembered how large and beautiful those looked which she saw through the magnifying glass; but these were much larger, and far different: they were living, and dreadful to look at; they were the Snow-queen's guards. They had the strangest shapes, some looking like frightful porcupines, others like knots of living snakes stretching out their heads, and others like fat little bears with



bristly hair; but all were a glittering white, — they were all living snow-flakes.

Then little Gerda prayed, and the cold was so great that she could see her own breath coming like smoke out of her mouth. The breath became denser and denser, at length assumed the forms of little angels, which grew larger and larger as they touched the ground. They all wore helmets on their heads, and held spears and shields in their hands, and their number was constantly increasing, so that by the time Gerda had finished her prayer she was surrounded by a whole legion. They thrust their spears into the frightful snow-flakes, breaking them into hundreds of pieces, and Gerda went on joyously and in safety. The



angels kissed her hands and feet, so that she felt less how extremely cold it was; and quickly she hastened on to the Snow-queen's palace.

But now let us first see what Kay was doing. He was certainly not thinking of little Gerda, and, least of all, that she was then standing outside the palace.

*Seventh Part. — Of the Snow-queen's Palace, and what happened in it.*

THE palace walls were of driven snow, and the doors and windows of the cutting winds. There were more than a hundred rooms, as the snow had formed them, the largest extending several miles, and all were lighted by the bright Northern Lights. They were all so large, so empty, and so icy-cold and shining! There was never any amusement there, not even a bears' ball, — for which the storm could have provided music, and the polar bears could have shown off their antics, walking on their hind legs. There were never any card-parties either, with tea and gossip, but empty, cold, and vast were the rooms of the Snow-queen's palace.

In the middle of the empty, immense snow-room there was a frozen lake, cracked into a thousand pieces, but each piece was so like the others that it seemed a masterly work of art; and in the middle of this sat the Snow-queen when she was at home. She used to say that she then sat on the Mirror of Reason, and that it was the only one in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue with cold, — indeed, almost black; but he did not know it, for she had kissed away the frost-shiver, and his heart was like a lump of ice. He was dragging some sharp-edged, flat pieces of ice about, and these he fitted together in all possible ways, just as we do small pieces of wood which we call the Chinese puzzle. Kay was also forming figures of the most wonderful description; and that was the Ice-Game of Reason. In his eyes the figures were perfect, and of the highest importance, for the piece of broken glass which was in his eye made him think so. He formed whole words, but he could never succeed in the one word he wished to have, — the word Eternity; for the Snow-queen had said to him, "If you can succeed in forming that one word you shall be your own master, and I will give you the whole world, together with a pair of new skates." But he could not.

"I am now going to pay a visit to the warmer countries," said the



Snow-Queen, "and intend giving a peep into the black caldrons," — she meant the volcanoes of Etna and Vesuvius. "I will cover them with white, which will also do good to the orange-trees and vines." Then the Snow-queen flew away, and Kay was left alone in those vast, empty rooms, staring at the pieces of ice, and thinking and thinking till his brain ached. He sat there so stiff and still that he looked as if he were frozen.

Just then little Gerda came into the palace through the large gate. Here were cutting winds; but she said her evening prayer, and the



winds were lulled as if they wanted to go to sleep, and she entered the large, empty, cold room. She then saw Kay, recognized him at once, and running up to him pressed him closely to her, and cried, "Kay! dear little Kay! so I have found you at last!"

But he sat quite still, stiff, and cold, and little Gerda cried bitter, burning tears, which fell upon his breast, and penetrating to his heart thawed the lump of ice and dissolved the piece of broken glass. He looked at her, and she sang the hymn, —

"Though the bloom of the rose will fade away,  
We shall meet the dear Christ-child some day.

Then Kay burst into tears, and cried till the pieces of glass were washed out of his eyes, — when he recognized her, and exclaimed in



delight, "Gerda! dear little Gerda! where have you been all this time, and where have I been?" He looked all around, and continued, "How cold it is here, and how vast and empty!" He pressed closely to her, and she laughed and cried in turns. There was such joy that even the pieces of ice danced; and when they were tired and lay down again they formed the letters of the word which, when discovered, the Snow-queen said he should be his own master, and she would give him the whole world, besides a pair of new skates.

Gerda kissed his cheeks, and the color came back into them; she kissed his eyes, and they were as bright as her own; she kissed his hands and feet, and he was himself again. The Snow-queen might now return, for his discharge was there written in sparkling ice.

They took each other by the hand and wandered out of the palace. They spoke of their grandmother, and of the rose-trees upon the roof, and wherever they went the winds were lulled and the sun burst forth; and when they got to the bush with the red berries they found the Reindeer waiting for them, and another with it. These carried them first to the Finn Woman, in whose hot room they warmed themselves and obtained information about their homeward journey; and then to the old Lapp Woman, who had made new clothes for them and got a sledge ready.

The two reindeer took them quickly to the borders of the country, and there the first green was springing up. Here they parted from the Reindeer and the old Lapp Woman, and all cried, "Good-by!" The little birds began to twitter, the buds were green on the trees in the woods, and out of it came riding a young girl on a beautiful horse which Gerda knew, for it was the one that had been harnessed to the golden carriage. This was the Robber-girl, with a red cap on her head and pistols in her belt. She had had enough of home, and was now travelling towards the North, to take another course later if that did not please her.

She and Gerda immediately recognized each other, and there was great rejoicing.

"You are a pretty fellow!" she said to little Kay; "I should like to know whether you deserve that one should run to the end of the world after you?"

But Gerda tapped her on the cheek and asked after the Prince and Princess.

"They have gone to a foreign country," said the Robber-girl.

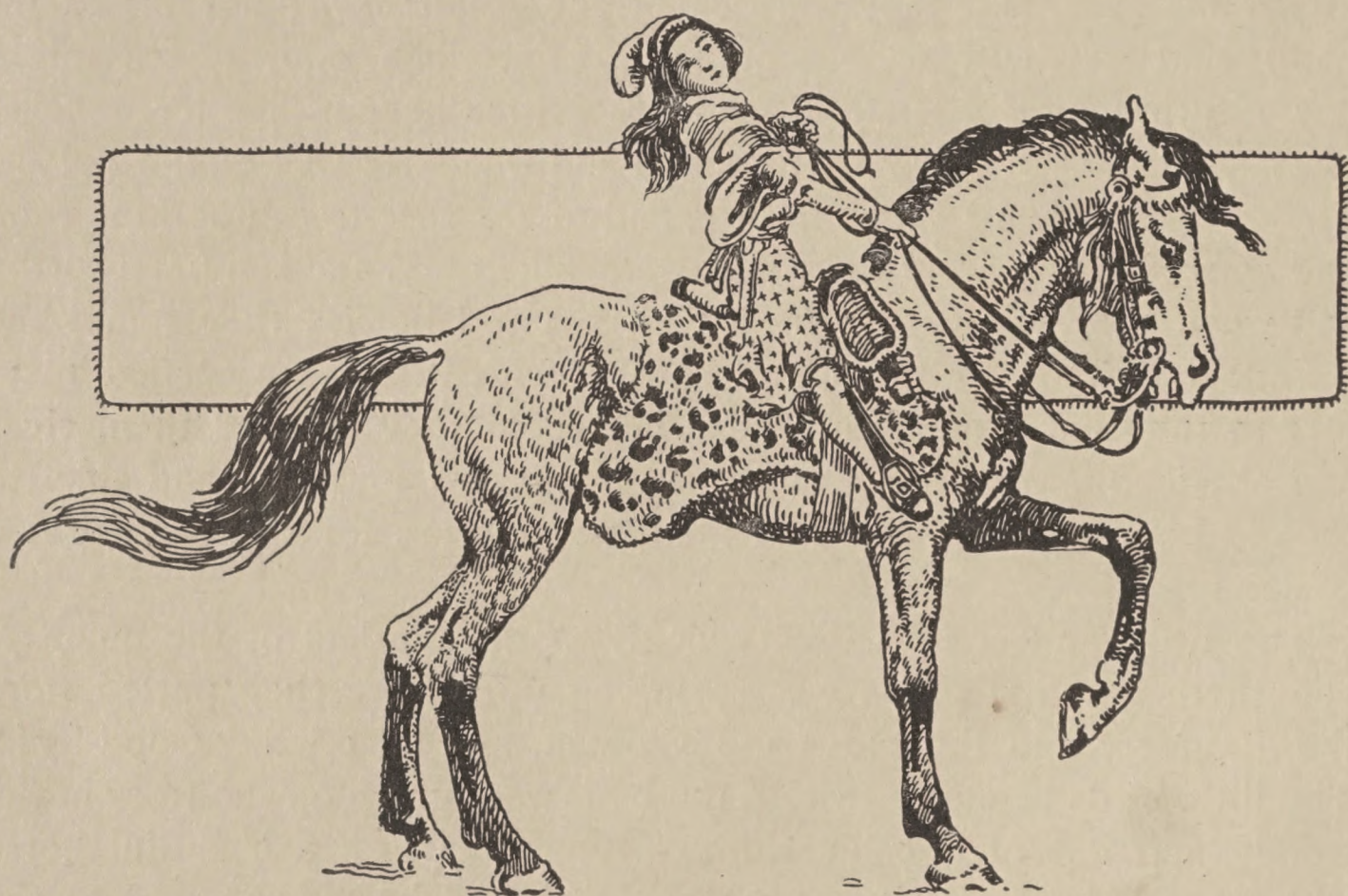


"And the Ravens?" asked Gerda.

"The Raven is dead," she answered, "and his wife, now a widow, goes about with a piece of black cotton round her leg, and laments dreadfully; but that is nothing but talk. But now tell me how it fared with you, and how you managed to catch him."

And Gerda and Kay told her all.

The Robber-girl took them both by the hand, and promised that if ever she should pass through their town she would come up to visit them; and then she rode on into the wide world.



Gerda and Kay continued their way hand in hand. It was delightful spring, with green leaves and beautiful flowers; the church-bells rang merrily, and they recognized the high steeples and the large city; it was that in which they lived. So they entered it and went to their grandmother's house, up the stairs, and into the room, where everything was just as it used to be, the clock going "tick, tick!" and the hands moving; but then they noticed that they were no longer children. The roses in the roof-gutter, in full bloom, crept in through the open window; and there stood the two children's stools, and Gerda seated herself on hers, and Kay took his, holding each other still by the hand. The cold, empty splendor of the Snow-queen's palace was forgotten like a disagreeable dream. The grandmother sat in the clear sunshine and



read aloud from the Bible, "Except ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter Heaven."

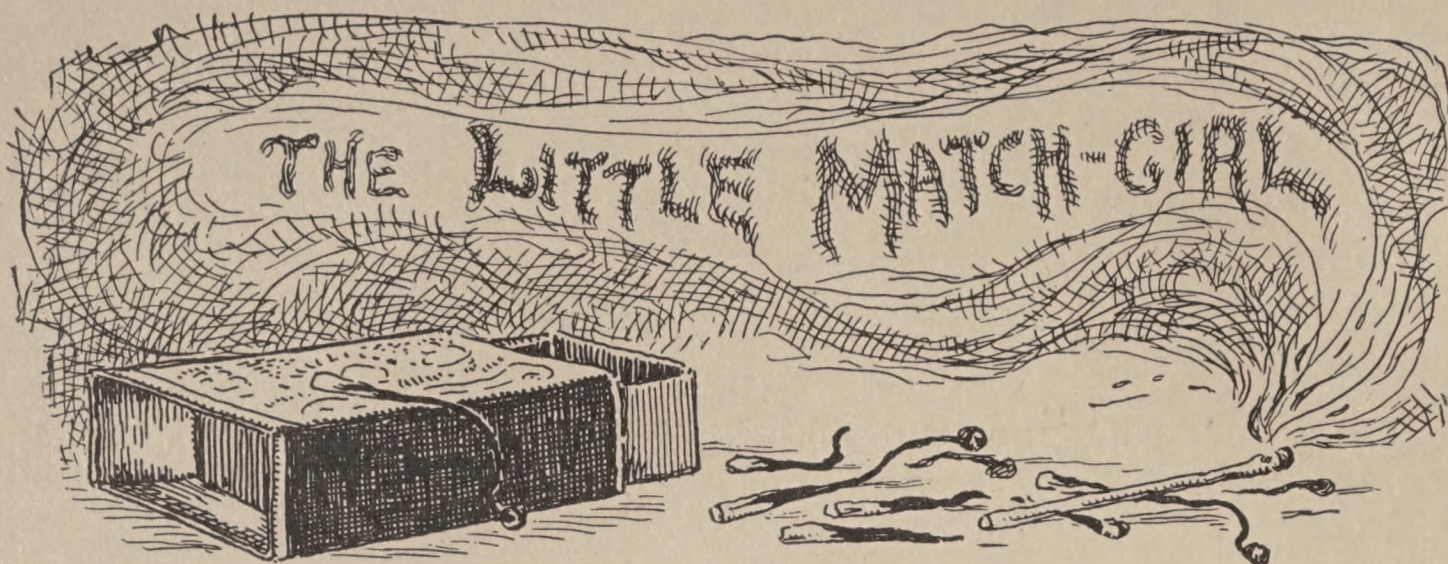
Kay and Gerda looked at each other, and both thought of the old hymn, —

"Though the bloom of the rose will fade away,  
We shall meet the dear Christ-child some day."

There they sat, grown up, and yet children; for in their hearts they were children. And it was summer, — warm, delightful summer within and without.







OH, how cold it was! It snowed and blew so just as it was getting dark, and it was the last day of the year. It was New Year's Eve.

In the cold and darkness a poor little girl was wandering in the streets with bare head and feet. She had had on slippers when she left home, but what good were they? They were very large, — her mother had worn them last, so big they were, — and the little girl had lost them as she hurried across the street to escape two rapidly driven vans. One of the slippers was not to be found, and the other a boy ran away with, saying he would use it for a cradle when he got children.

There wandered the little girl on her tiny naked feet, which were red and blue with the cold. She had a lot of wooden matches in an old apron, and she carried one bundle in her hand. Nobody had bought anything of her the whole day, and nobody had given her a copper. She was hungry and cold, and looked so wretched, poor little mite! The snow-flakes fell on her long yellow hair, which clustered so prettily round her neck; yet she thought but little of that ornament. From all windows light shone, and in the streets it smelled so deliciously of roast goose, for it was New Year's Eve.<sup>1</sup>

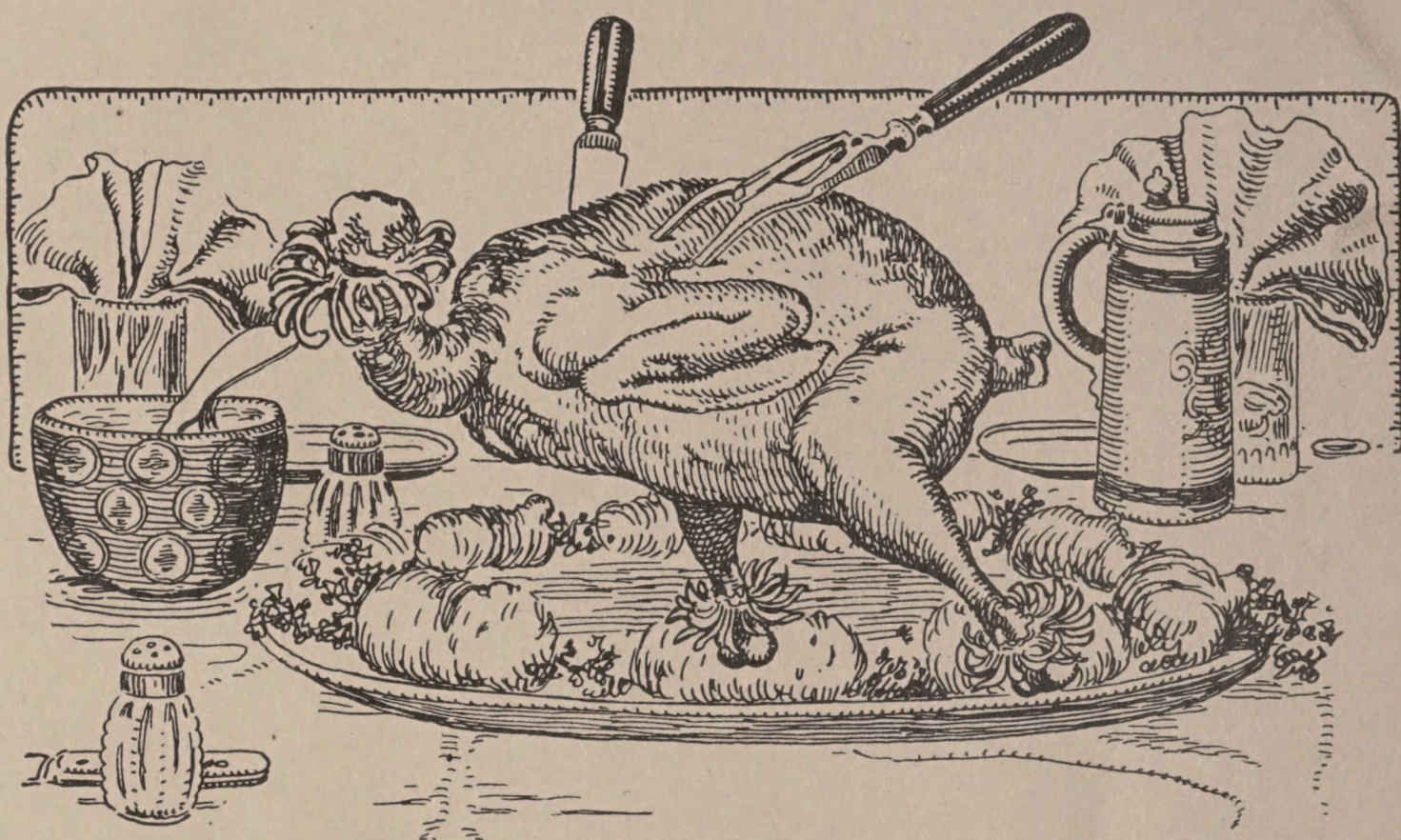
She sat down in a corner between two houses, one of which projected a little more than the other, and drew up her little feet, but she froze all the more. And she did not dare to go home, for as she had not sold any matches, and nobody had given her anything, her father would beat her; and it was cold at home, too. They lived right under the roof, where the wind whistled through holes filled with straw and rags. Her little hands were quite benumbed with cold. Oh, how nice a match would be! If she only dared to draw one from the bundle and strike it against the wall and warm her hands! She drew one out. *R-r-atch!* how it sputtered and burnt! When she held her hand around

<sup>1</sup> Roast goose is very commonly eaten in Scandinavia on New Year's Eve. — TR.



it, it was a warm, bright flame like a little candle. It was such a wonderful light! The little girl fancied she was sitting in front of a great fire with shining fire-irons, it burnt so splendidly and warmed so much. What was that? The little girl already stretched out her feet to warm them — and the match went out. The stove was gone; she was sitting with a little bit of burnt wood in her hand.

Another one was lighted. It burnt and shone, and where the light fell on the wall it became as transparent as gauze, and she could look



right into the room. A table was laid with a snow-white cloth and fine china, and splendid stuffed goose steamed on the table. And what was most glorious was that the goose jumped from the dish and waddled along the floor, with a knife and fork in the back, right up to the poor girl, when — the match went out, leaving her only the black wall to stare at.

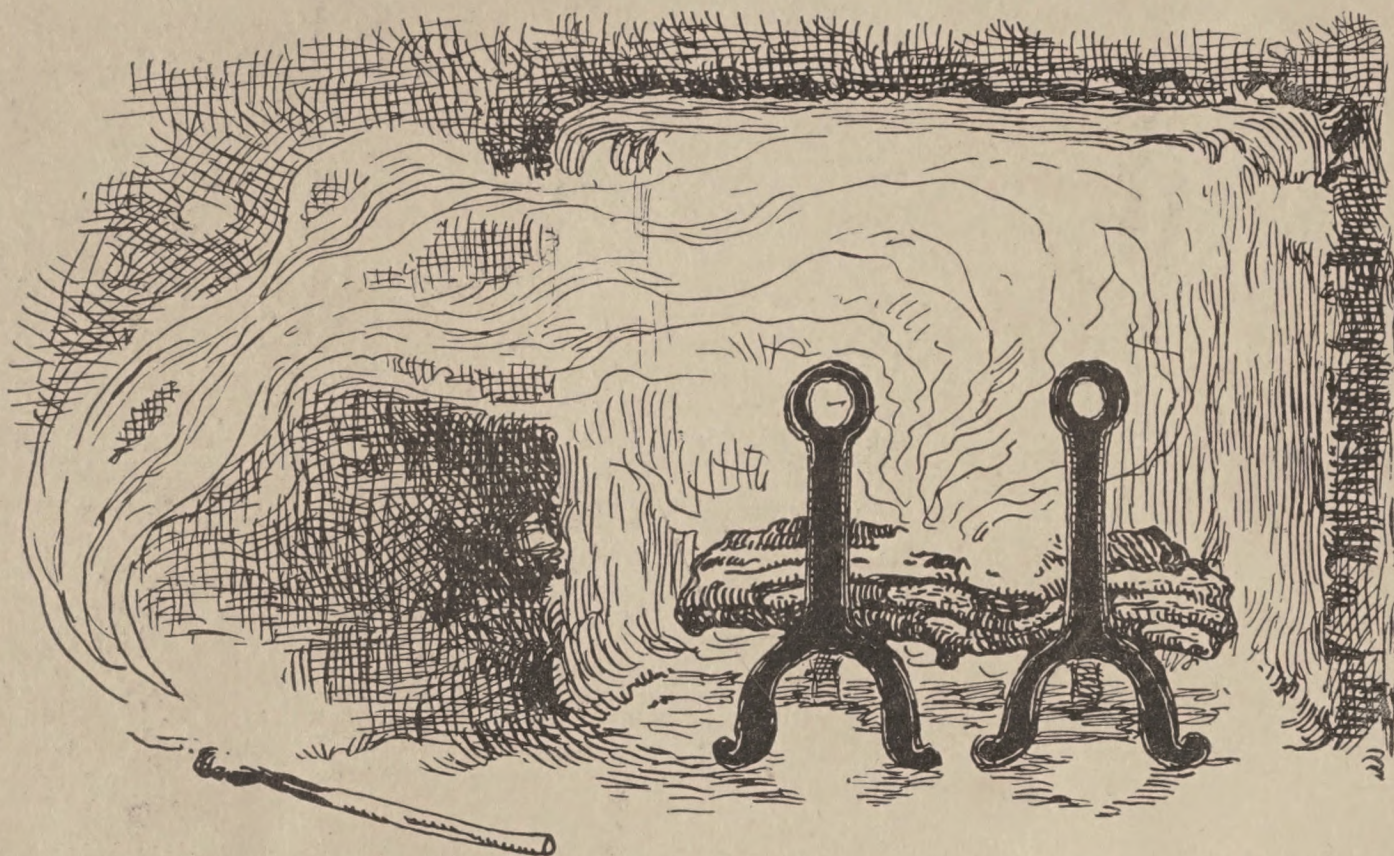
She lit a new one. Now she was sitting under the loveliest Christmas-tree, far bigger and more decorated than that she had seen through the door at the rich merchant's last Christmas. Thousands of candles burnt on the green branches, and variegated pictures like those she had seen in the shop-windows looked down upon her. The little one stretched both her hands upwards, when — the match went out! But the thousands of lights rose higher and higher, and she saw that they had become bright stars. One fell, leaving a long bright trail in the sky.



"Now somebody has just died!" said the little girl; for her old grandmother, who was the only one who had been kind to her, and who was dead, had told her that when a star falls a soul ascends to Heaven.

She struck one match more, and it shone around her; and lo! in the light stood her grandmother, looking so bright, kind, and good.

"Grandmother!" cried the child; "take me with you. I know you will disappear with the light, like the warm stove, the splendid goose, and the great Christmas-tree." And she struck quickly all her matches



in the bundle, for she wished to retain her grandmother. And the matches shone with a brightness clearer than daylight. Grandmother had never looked so handsome and so tall. She lifted the little girl in her arms, and they flew in glory and joyousness so high, so high! but there was no hunger, no care, no cold, for they were with God.

But the little girl sat in the corner frozen to death; still a happy smile played round her mouth and her cheeks were red. She had frozen to death on the last night of the old year.

New Year's morning rose upon the little corpse, which still held the bundle of matches, most of which were burnt. "She has tried to warm herself," people said. But nobody knew what a lovely sight she had beheld, and in what glory she had gone with her old grandmother into New Year's joys.























LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00025724173